

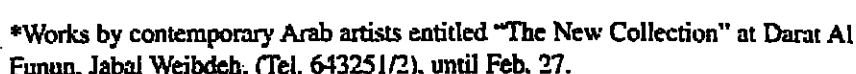








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## China flexes muscles as tension grows over N. Korean defector

BEIJING (AFP) — The diplomatic stalemate surrounding a top North Korean defector in Beijing dragged on Saturday as China sought to assert its control over an increasingly tense situation.

Security was tighter than at any other time since the defection saga began Wednesday morning when 73-year-old Hwang Jang-Yop, the most senior official ever to defect from the Stalinist North, sought asylum in the embassy's Consular Department.

In a clear sign China has no intention of allowing its capital to become a battleground for volatile North-South tensions, riot police backed up by an armoured vehicle with water cannon reinforced the sealed area surrounding the consular building Saturday afternoon.

A mobile command centre, belonging to the Beijing Fire Department and equipped with surveillance equipment, was also drafted in.

Security personnel maintained a heavy but discrete presence, with at least 100 uniformed officers manning roadblocks or sitting in jeeps and minivans parked in side streets around the

consular entrance.

Police earlier launched an operation to completely secure the area after provocative moves by officials from the North Korean mission in Beijing.

Just before dawn, around 50 paramilitary People's Armed Police (PAP), carrying AK-47 assault rifles and wearing metal helmets, laid spikes across roads and pavements to reinforce the roadblocks.

They arrived shortly after a North Korean diplomatic car drove at speed towards one of the cordons, stopping just in front of the police tape before turning and veering past television reporters attempting to film the vehicle.

The Chinese show of strength was not only aimed at the North Koreans.

South Korean embassy vehicles were subject to strict checks before being allowed in or out of the area, with police insisting drivers open their car trunks for inspection.

The defection has placed China in a difficult position, as it strives to seek a solution without being seen to favour either its old ally of the North or its new economic partners in the South.

North Korea has said Mr. Hwang — the country's top

ideologue and highest-ranking official ever to defect — was "kidnapped." Pyongyang cadres have made several attempts to get through to the South Korean mission. North Korean embassy cars and dozens of staffers maintained their round-the-clock vigil in the area, covering all exit routes that could be used to rush Mr. Hwang to the airport.

"He is one of our people, who worked all his life for our country," said one North Korean onlooker, who added he had been working in Beijing for two years.

"He was one of our top leaders — we don't know what happened."

South Korea Saturday called for security to be boosted on its Asian flights and around key facilities and officials following North Korean threats of retaliation for Mr. Hwang's "kidnapping."

Top-level talks in Singapore aimed at resolving the drama produced no breakthrough as Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said Beijing needed more time to decide how to deal with Mr. Hwang.

"This incident happened all of a sudden so we need more time to investigate," Mr. Qian said, after a hastily

arranged 50 minute meeting on the sidelines of an international conference in Singapore with his South Korean counterpart, Yoo Chong-Ha.

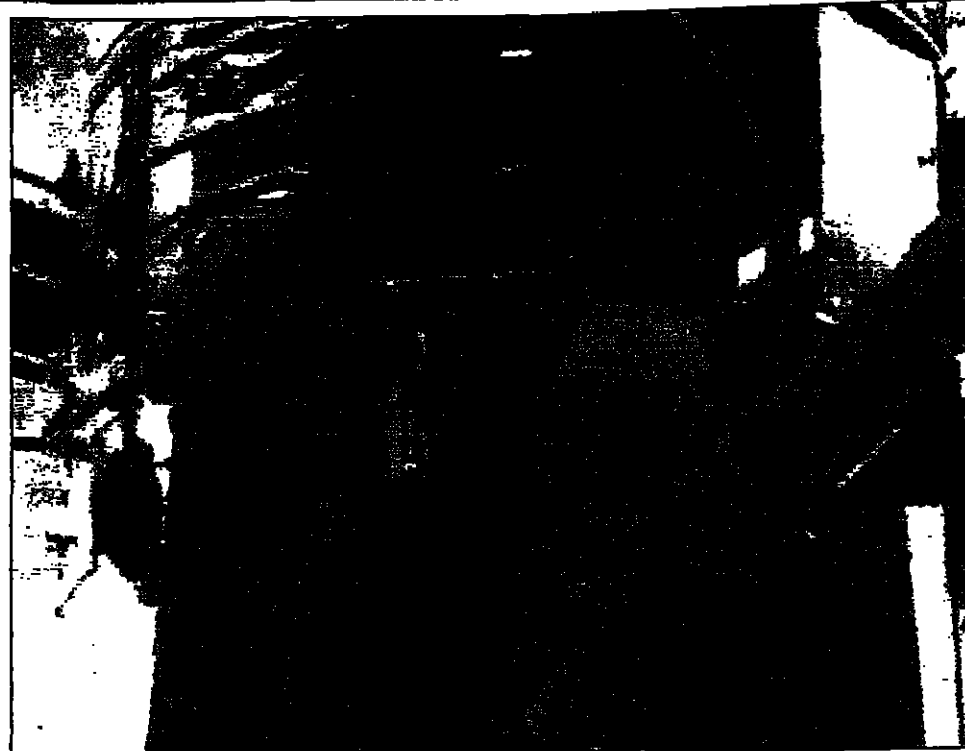
Mr. Qian called for calm on all sides and stressed Beijing had no prior knowledge of the defection bid. Beijing fought alongside the North in the 1950-53 Korean War but is now also building ties with the capitalist South.

It established diplomatic links with Seoul in 1992 and has since strived to maintain a strictly even policy towards the two Koreas.

The defection comes at a particularly sensitive time for the isolated North, which is grappling with severe food shortages as it prepares to celebrate the 55th birthday of uncrowned leader Kim Jong-Il Sunday.

The U.S. State Department stressed it had no part to play in the matter, which it said should be resolved "amicably" between China and South Korea.

However, a Japanese newspaper report Saturday said U.S. CIA officials had already contacted Mr. Hwang in Beijing to discuss ways to transfer the defector to South Korea through a third country.



Astronauts from the shuttle Discovery work on the Hubble space telescope mounted in the shuttle's bay while orbiting over the Pacific Ocean. Greg Harbaugh (left) is opening a door on the Hubble in order to install an improved guidance sensor in the craft as Joe Tanner (right) assists (Reuters photo)

## Hubble repair spacewalk underway

JOHNSON SPACE CENTRE, Texas (R) — Astronauts from the shuttle Discovery stepped outside late Friday for the second of four spacewalks to upgrade the capabilities of the Hubble space telescope.

Greg Harbaugh and Joe Tanner crawled out the shuttle's airlock hatch at about 10:30 p.m. est (0330 GMT Saturday) as the shuttle orbited 360 miles above the Pacific Ocean.

"Welcome to space," mission control's Jeff Hoffman radioed to Tanner, who was making his first spacewalk. "It's nice seeing a big smile on your face. Have a good one."

During the planned six-hour excursion, the two men are to gently insert into the telescope an improved guidance sensor the size of a baby grand piano.

Tanner was to work perched on the end of the shuttle's 15-metre robot

arm, while Harbaugh assisted while tethered to the telescope like a mountain climber.

The 223-kilogramme sensor was fitted with special optics to correct Hubble's mishaped mirror. The wedge-shaped device will allow the telescope to be pointed at celestial objects with greater precision.

The sensor can accurately determine the position of stars about 10 times more precisely than ground-based telescopes. Astronomers hope to use it to detect tiny wobbles in the motion of nearby stars that might indicate the presence of a planet.

Also on the list for Friday night's work was the replacement of a failed reel-to-reel tape recorder.

Earlier Friday, astronauts Mark Lee and Steve Smith walked outside to install a pair of new science instruments aboard the telescope.

They replaced two ageing instruments with a multi-purpose infrared camera and an improved light-splitting spectrograph.

"It is almost impossible to imagine the Hubble space telescope being any better than it has been for the last three years, but you guys have made it so," Hoffman told the crew after the first spacewalk.

Two more spacewalks were planned for Saturday and Sunday nights to complete the \$350 million refurbishment of the orbiting observatory.

It was the first time astronauts have worked on the telescope since a 1993 mission repaired its blurred vision.

Since that flight, the telescope has provided definitive proof that star-devouring black holes exist and has reached puzzling conclusions about the age of the universe.

## Chechens vote in 2nd round of parliamentary polls

MOSCOW (AFP) — Chechens voted Saturday in the second and final round of parliamentary elections, which came three days after separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov was inaugurated as president.

In the Jan. 27 first round, which took place simultaneously with the presidential election, there were 850 candidates chasing the 63 seats and only five candi-

dates won outright.

The rest will be decided in the run-off vote between the two frontrunners in the first round. There will be no third round. The winners in Saturday's races will be candidates who get a simple majority.

Chechens see the presidential and parliamentary elections as steps to formalising the independence they unilaterally declared in 1991, just before the fall of

the Soviet Union, and fought for against Russian troops in a 21-month war which ended last year.

Mr. Maskhadov, who won the presidency with 59.32 per cent of the vote, was inaugurated Wednesday, swearing "to reinforce the independence of the Chechen state."

Mr. Maskhadov, chief of staff in the war, is likely to run a strongly presidential republic.

According to ITAR-TASS, quoting unnamed sources, Mr. Maskhadov will hold the functions of prime minister and commander of the armed forces. He is expected to announce his cabinet shortly.

Under a peace agreement in August 1996, Russia and Chechenya agreed to keep negotiating the status of the tiny Muslim republic, reaching a deal by 2001.

## Russian think-tank sees threat if army is not reformed

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's underfunded army is facing collapse which could lead to civil war or a military coup and can no longer defend the country, a non-government research organisation has said.

"The army has long ceased to be a guarantee against external threats," said a statement by the Council for Foreign and Defence Policy, published in the daily Nezavisimaya Gazeta.

"The present state of the Russian army can be described only as a catastrophe of the armed forces which... is growing into a national catastrophe."

The council groups political analysts, parliamentary deputies, business leaders and journalists.

"Within the next three years the army, if it is not reformed, will disappear as such, or it will break up into armed groups which make ends meet through selling arms or robberies, or there could be a military coup which could grow into dic-

tatorship or civil war," the statement said.

Many soldiers and officers are underpaid, underfed and poorly clothed, suffering from wage delays affecting millions of workers across Russia.

President Boris Yeltsin, in a promise made during his campaign for reelection, said he would replace Russia's conscript army with an all-professional force by 2000.

But reforms have barely got off the drawing board, partly because of differences over how to carry them out and partly because of Mr. Yeltsin's absence from the Kremlin through illness for much of the last seven months.

The think-tank said costly military reform could not start yet. It suggested keeping the army away from politics, creating a civilian Defence Ministry and working out how to stop experienced commanders leaving for better paid jobs elsewhere.

Defence Minister Igor

Rodionov, pleading for military reform and higher defence spending, said last week that cash shortages had hit morale and reduced combat readiness.

But the council said Russia could not boost spending now and it listed three reform options — describing all of them unacceptable.

Cutting the armed forces to 200,000-300,000 people, cutting proportionally the number of strategic nuclear forces

— Leaving the nuclear forces intact, but slashing conventional forces.

Keeping the armed forces at its present level of 1.5-1.7 million as now, but without military training, strategic nuclear forces or the ability to buy new arms or finance new science projects.

"Hot debates between the government and military top brass about the military budget show their inability to make a choice about the path of reform in the army," it said.

## 12 armed extremists killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — At least 12 armed Muslim extremists have been killed in a security operation near Algiers, the daily Al Khabar reported Saturday.

The killings took place in the region around Saida and Sidi Bel Abbas, on the high plateaus west of the capital, which has witnessed an upsurge in activity by armed groups over recent weeks, the newspaper said.

Al Khabar also reported violent clashes between two rival fundamentalist groups, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), the armed wing of the now-disbanded Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), in the area around Mascara, southwest of Algiers. The fighting left "dozens dead on both sides," the newspaper said.

The two groups also clashed in the mountains at Medea and Bouira, south of the capital, leaving "many dead and wounded," Al Khabar said.

Meanwhile, 30 villagers who supported the AIS were killed at Kiten, near Medea, by a GIA team. Civilians armed with machetes and nail-studded clubs have been guarding the village since.

Algeria's official human rights group Friday called on authorities to ensure the security of civilians after political violence killed hundreds in the past few weeks.

Algeria's state-owned radio quoted a statement issued by the state Observatoire National Des Droits de L'Homme (ONDH) as saying: "The authorities should take all available measures to ensure the security of Algeria's citizens and protect their property within strict respect of the state of law."

The group said the massacres of civilians by the "Armed Islamic Groups" should be denounced.

## Burma's Suu Kyi should drop sanction call — Thai minister

SINGAPORE (R) — Thailand wants Europe to coax Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi into dropping her call for sanctions against Rangoon. Foreign Minister Prachuab Chaiyasarn said Saturday.

He said the 15-member European Union wanted the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Rangoon is due to join, to press military-ruled Burma to improve its human rights record.

"We would like the West to do the same thing and talk to Aung San Suu Kyi to turn down her decision and give her hand to the other side and start up a convention," Mr. Prachuab told reporters at an Asia-Europe foreign ministers meeting.

Ms. Suu Kyi has called repeatedly for sanctions against Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), which seized power in 1988 and

ignored the results of subsequent elections her party won.

Instead of that, Europe and ASEAN should use their connections in Burma to improve the situation there, he said.

The two sides had a "shared responsibility" to do so, he added.

Doug Bereuter, chairman of the U.S. House of representatives Sub-Committee on East Asia and the Pacific, said Friday that stepped-up repression in Burma required President Bill Clinton to ban new U.S. investment there.

Mr. Prachuab said ASEAN — Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — would try "every which way" to persuade Burma to conform to international values.

But, he said: "This will take time and cannot be forced upon them."

Bangkok's way of trying to get neighbouring Burma to introduce democracy was by asking the military government to learn from the history of Thailand, which also has had long years of military rule, he said.

Mr. Prachuab said there was not yet a consensus in ASEAN on when to admit Burma into the regional grouping, an issue being studied by a technical team examining whether Rangoon had complied with the spirit of ASEAN.

But other ASEAN officials say it could be admitted, along with Laos and Cambodia, as early as this year.

That possibility was a cloud hanging over the meeting in Singapore of foreign ministers planning a second Asia-Europe summit due to be held in Britain next April. The first was held in Bangkok last year.

Europe has barred senior Burmese officials.

## China: H. Kong may adopt some human rights laws

SINGAPORE (R) — Chinese-run Hong Kong might consider adopting international human rights laws if these regulations are "the same" as the Communist country's laws, a senior Chinese official said Saturday.

The official also said the running of Hong Kong should not be debated internationally, saying such a move would only raise fears among the business community and hurt investment.

"International laws are different from China's domestic laws and if we want to adopt international laws, they must be the same as China's domestic laws," Guo Chongli, spokesman for China's delegation to a meeting of European and Asian foreign ministers in Singapore, told journalists.

But he said if international laws and Chinese laws were compatible, they could be adopted.

"We need time to study

this," Mr. Guo said when asked whether such studies would be completed before the handover of Hong Kong to China from Britain at midnight on June 30.

"Legal experts need to make in-depth studies...it is too early to discuss this now," he added.

Britain, the current Hong Kong authorities, and a number of Western countries have expressed concern over the future of human rights in the territory after the handover.

On Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and his British counterpart Malcolm Rifkind met but failed to reach agreement on a provisional legislature established by Beijing to set laws for the territory after the handover.

"The issue (of Hong Kong) should be handled by China and Britain together but after June 30, it will be China's internal affair," Mr. Guo said.

Britain has complained the provisional legislature breaks previous promises made by Beijing over the post-handover Hong Kong constitution, and has suggested the issue be raised at the International Court of Justice (World Court) in the Hague.

Britain has also said it is keen to raise the international profile of civil rights issues in Hong Kong, hoping this will increase pressure on Beijing to respect the wishes of the territory's 6.3 million people.

"The higher the profile of these issues, the higher the price China will have to pay for changing Hong Kong," one senior British official told reporters.

But Mr. Guo said an international debate over Hong Kong could merely damage its business prospects.

He said China did not want Hong Kong discussed at Saturday's ministerial meeting in Singapore.

## 3 men head list of possible Kohl successors

BONN (R) — As speculation continues about whether German Chancellor Helmut Kohl will decide to step down this year, three men head the pack of possible successors: His closest aide Wolfgang Schauble, Bavarian Premier Edmund Stoiber and Defence Minister Volker Ruehe.

None is likely to make a serious move until Mr. Kohl, in power for 14 years, decides whether or not to stand in the October 1998 general election — something he has promised to ponder after an EU summit in June.

But all have discreetly moved themselves into position for a crack at the top job, if not sooner then later.

Unquestioned favourite and Mr. Kohl's preferred candidate is Wolfgang Schauble, 54, the chancellor's trusty lieutenant and trouble-shooter for his entire tenure, who has been confined to a wheelchair since being shot by a deranged woman in 1990.

The attack came just a week after the German unification ceremony which crowned Mr. Schauble's greatest achievement, the negotiation of the treaty which brought together capitalist West Germany and the formerly Communist East.

Within weeks, Mr. Schauble was back at his desk as interior minister, then switching to his current post as head of Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) in parliament, maintaining iron discipline and often drawing fire aimed at the chancellor.

Mr. Schauble's unquestioned loyalty to Mr. Kohl and the affection which saw Mr. Kohl weep at his bedside after the attack — has earned him the chancellor's blessing to move into position as a possible successor.

A poll in the weekly Der Spiegel said 40 per cent of Germans saw Mr. Schauble as the best conservative successor to Mr. Kohl, with 24 per cent for Mr. Stoiber and 14 per cent for Mr. Ruehe.

Despite his often abrasive manner with colleagues and opponents alike, and his disability, Schauble outscored his rivals on every characteristic except physical fitness.

Even that has become less of an issue for ordinary Germans as Mr. Schauble has steadily stripped away the taboos surrounding paralysis, even going so far as to say in his autobiography that it was possible for a paraplegic to have a sex life of sorts.

In an interview last month with the magazine Stern, he staked his clearest claim yet to be chancellor one day, saying it was a temptation he could probably not refuse.

Adding that it was fair for Germans to ask if a "cripple" could do the job. "If Mr. Schauble does not get the job, he is sure to have a big say in who does — something that could be an obstacle to the ambition of Bavaria's workaholic and openly ambitious Premier Edmund Stoiber, 55."

Mr. Stoiber's chancellor credentials stem from his success in dragging Bavaria's Christian Social Union (CSU) out of a mire of corruption scandals with puritanical zeal, and shored up an absolute conservative majority in Germany's biggest state.

Owing no allegiance to Mr. Kohl and giving little loyalty to his own CSU chairman and Bonn finance minister, Theo Waigel, Mr. Stoiber has also played to ordinary German fears of an EU single currency by making himself the most prominent conservative critic of EU monetary union.

Less of an outsider is Volker Ruehe, 54.

The bullish English teacher has earned his spurs by skillfully persuading Germans to give up long-cherished scruples and agree to let German troops go on missions abroad.



U.S. Army Stabilisation Unit held territories near... claimed by both Bosnian... pending a final decision

## Conference

BRUCKE, Germany (Reuters) — A conference on the future of the Balkans is being held in Brucke, Germany. The conference is being held by the German government and the European Union. The conference is being held to discuss the future of the Balkans and the role of the German government and the European Union.

We will have a conference in Brucke in the beginning of March to start looking at the different issues in the Balkans. Mr. Kohl said after holding initial talks on the

## Pakistan's with Bhutto

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — A report from Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto began her new role as opposition leader. She is now in London to meet with the British Prime Minister. She is also meeting with the British Prime Minister to discuss the situation in Pakistan.

The session opened just two days before Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was sworn in for the second time. She is now in London to meet with the British Prime Minister to discuss the situation in Pakistan.

Mr. Bhutto who was sacked by President Farooq Ahmad Leghari in November on charges of corruption, misuse of power and human rights abuses, had earlier threatened to boycott the sessions of the new parliament claiming the Feb. 16 polls were rigged.

## Leaders of male-f

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Three world leaders Saturday called for concrete action to balance the number of men and women in parliaments where female representation runs from 10 to 100 per cent.

Namibia President Sam Nujoma, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed and outgoing Icelandic President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir and only member of parliament could ensure proper democracy.

Mr. Finnbogadóttir, the first day of the International Women's Day summit. "Motivation to change must be inspired by men and women alike. Women's rights are human rights," he said.

## Clinton p

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Administration, in a bid to win the chemical weapons response to any U.S. forces with power on the Post reported Saturday. The Post said the administration, although not explicitly, is working against U.S. forces with chemical weapons.

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The report said President



**3 men head list of possible successors**

BOON (R) — As speculation continues about the future of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, three men are seen as the most likely successors. The list includes Wolfgang Schäuble, Bavarian Minister-President, and Klaus Kinkel, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Kohl is expected to leave office in June.



U.S. Army Stabilisation Force (SFOR) soldiers check a car in the Zone of Separation between Serb and Muslim-Croat held territories near the northern town of Brcko. A U.S. arbiter ruled that the volatile Bosnian town of Brcko, claimed by both Bosnian Serbs and the Muslim-Croat Federation, would be put under international supervision pending a final decision next year on its status (Reuters photo)

### Conference on Brcko to be held in March — Bildt

BRCKO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP) — Bosnia's top international mediator, high representative Carl Bildt, said Saturday that an international conference on how to implement the Brcko arbitration would be held in Vienna next month.

"We will have a conference in Vienna in the beginning of March to start to look into the different issues. It is a very demanding task," Mr. Bildt said after holding initial talks on the decision at a U.S. SFOR base outside the town.

The Arbitration Commission charged with settling whether the town should remain in Serb hands or go to the Muslim-Croat Federation decided to postpone a final decision for another year, but appointed an international supervisor who Mr. Bildt said would have sweeping powers to govern the town.

Muslim and Croat refugees from the town, where they formed a pre-war majority, would have the right to return under the agreement.

However, Mr. Bildt said the details would still have to be worked out, as well as the specific powers of the international supervisor.

Speaking at the United States SFOR base at Camp MacGovern, three kilometres south of the disputed town, Mr. Bildt said that the arbitration agreement faced "severe tests."

"It is somewhat easier to write the thing in a Washington law firm than to do it on the ground in Brcko. This is a potential spot where the war could restart. It is a question of taking this away," he added.

Mr. Bildt later left the heavily-protected base in a convoy of vehicles to tour the disputed town, where he was due to meet the Serb mayor, as well as the mayors of the Croat and Muslim refugee communities, who live a few kilometres away in federation territory.

### Pakistan's new parliament convenes with Bhutto as opposition leader

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Deposed Pakistani Premier Benazir Bhutto began her new role as opposition leader as the newly-elected parliament convened on a five-year term with an inaugural session here Saturday.

The first session, opened just two days before Prime Minister Designate Nawaz Sharif was due to be sworn in for the second time as premier after his electoral drubbing of Ms. Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The outgoing speaker, Yousuf Reza Gilani, a Bhutto ally, who retained office when the previous assembly was dissolved on Nov. 5, presided over the sitting, devoted to oath-taking and signing of membership roster.

Ms. Bhutto, who was sacked by President Farooq Ahmad Leghari in November on charges of corruption, misuse and human rights abuses, had earlier threatened to boycott the sessions of the new parliament claiming the Feb. 3 polls were rigged.

The Election Commission, on the eve of the new session, suspended results from three constituencies pending the outcome of petitions challenging the electoral result, clearing the way for 201 members to assume their seats.

Three other constituencies have yet to go to the polls as elections there were postponed due to the natural deaths of one candidate in each before the election triggered by Ms. Bhutto's dismissal.

The 217-member National Assembly includes 207 Muslim members and 10 deputies representing the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Ahmadi minorities in the world's second largest Muslim country.

Dominated by Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party of Mr. Sharif, the man designated to lead the country for the next five years, the assembly will elect a new speaker and his deputy Sunday.

Mr. Sharif, 48, a rich industrialist from Punjab, the largest of Pakistan's four provinces, is to be sworn in Monday after his election by the assembly to complete a constitutional formality.

The party of Mr. Sharif, who served as prime minister from 1990 to 1993, commands a two-thirds majority in the house, with the PPP hanging on to 19 seats and leading a tiny opposition.

Although he claimed the election results — endorsed by independent international monitors — were "engineered" by Mr. Leghari and his caretaker administration, Ms. Bhutto has said she would cooperate in consolidating the fragile democratic process.

Mr. Sharif, addressing a pre-session meeting of his parliamentary group here late Friday, pledged "complete transparency" in running the government and "full respect" to the opposition.

"We will have a working relationship with the opposition," he said, ruling out politics of confrontation and revenge.

### Tajikistan meets some demands of kidnappers

DUSHANBE (R) — An Islamic group holding more than a dozen hostages in Tajikistan and demanding the release of fellow-fighters from Afghanistan, were joined Friday by 25 of their comrades. A Russian official said.

But it remained unclear if a hostage-for-fighter swap would go ahead, more than a week after the hostages were seized.

ITAR-TASS news agency said rebel leader Bakhran Sadirov had told Russian Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Ignatenko that a helicopter with 25 fighters aboard had arrived at the rebels' base, some 80 kilometres from the Tajik capital Dushanbe.

Another helicopter was expected soon with 10 more rebel fighters, Mr. Ignatenko was quoted as saying.

Mr. Ignatenko said after speaking to Mr. Sadirov that reports that one hostage, a United Nations military observer, had been killed were not true.

The rebels' main conditions for releasing the hostages has been for Tajik authorities to fly in their comrades from neighbouring Afghanistan and allow the two groups to meet up.

The hostages include three U.N. observers — two from Switzerland and one from Ukraine — four Russian journalists and four workers with the U.N. Refugee agency.

The reporters have been sending frequent reports to their employers in Moscow on the rebels' satellite telephone, but it is not clear to what extent they are simply reporting what their captors tell them to say.

Tajikistan's security minister was seized last weekend when he tried to negotiate with the hostage-takers, who once backed the former Soviet republic's Islamic opposition but whose loyalties are now unclear.

The hostage crisis has highlighted the instability of Tajikistan, an impoverished former Soviet republic bordering Afghanistan and China.

Armed groups opposed to President Imomali Rakhmonov are scattered across the country and some fighters, such as those loyal to Bakhran Sadirov and his brother Rivzon, are based in neighbouring Afghanistan.

### Leaders call for action to narrow male-female political divide

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Three world leaders Saturday called for concrete action to balance the number of men and women in parliaments, where female representation runs from zero to a high of 40 per cent.

Namibian President Sam Nujoma, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed and outgoing Icelandic President Vigdis Finnbogadóttir said only gender equality in politics could ensure proper democracy.

Ms. Finnbogadóttir told the first day of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) summit: "Motivation for change must be inspired by men and women alike. Women's rights are human rights."

"Human rights are women's rights," she said, adding the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 18 months ago had been a breakthrough.

"It has the potential to be a milestone in history if each person goes beyond words, beyond orders and declarations and understands truly the commitment to change being sought on behalf of half the world's population."

Sheikh Hasina told the delegates from 77 countries society was still prejudiced against women.

"Women no longer want to remain peripheral actors and want to play their rightful role in all spheres of life including economic and political life," she said, adding that political empowerment should start at the grassroots and be worked up.

Mr. Nujoma said power-sharing implied equality at all levels, adding: "It is shocking that while in 1985, women constituted 12.1 per cent of the world's parliamentarians, that figure dropped to 11.7 per cent. Women comprised only 6.2 per cent of ministerial posts globally, while 62 countries have no women ministers at all."

"At the United Nations, out of 185 permanent representatives, only six are women."

### Clinton promises overwhelming response to any chemical attack

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Clinton administration, in a bid to win Senate ratification of the chemical weapons convention, is pledging an "overwhelming and devastating response" to any enemy attack on U.S. forces with poison gas, the Washington Post reported Saturday.

The Post said the unusual pledge would apply, although not require, the use of nuclear weapons against an enemy attacking U.S. forces with chemical weapons.

The report said President Bill Clinton's administration was offering the legally binding pledge in an effort to gain Senate ratification of the treaty by the April 29 deadline.

A number of Republican senators oppose the pact or are uncommitted. Ratification requires a two-thirds majority of the Senate.

The promise of a strong response is aimed at critics of the treaty who say rogue countries such as Libya or Iraq, which have not signed the agreement, would be free to use chemical weapons with impunity, the Post said.

## Zairean rebel radio says Kisangani will 'fall soon'

KISANGANI (Agencies) — The strategic city of Kisangani in eastern Zaire will "soon fall" to rebels in control of a swathe of territory in the area, Radio Bukavu, which is controlled by the rebels, reported Saturday.

The rebels, who took the key city of Isiro, northeast of Kisangani, at the start of the week, have also seized Faradje, near the Sudanese border, and are now heading towards Buta, to the west, the radio said.

They are also making progress in Shaba, a rich mining province further south, the radio said, adding that a counter-offensive by government troops had been "crushed."

Earlier, several sources in Kisangani said Zairean government forces backed by Rwandan soldiers and mercenaries were regaining the initiative in their battle against the rebels.

The government said Friday it had retaken the town of Bafwasende, towards Isiro, and sources reported a new impetus in the campaign due to the arrival of light armoured vehicles with 14.5-mm heavy guns, which were dispatched to Bafwasende and towards Walikale to the southeast.

Serb-piloted Aermachi fighter bombers were providing air support for troops on the ground, the sources added, while Serb mercenaries were fighting the rebels near Lubutu, southeast of Kisangani, about 50 kilometres from the Tingi-Tingi refugee camp.

Four of the mercenaries, who are engaged in combat in the area for the first time, were wounded in the fighting, one with a serious head injury. They were flown to Kisangani by helicopter, a Western source said.

Government troops in the area are also being supported by between 1,000 and 1,500 former Rwandan soldiers from the refugee camps there.

So far the rag-tag Zairean army appears to have been little match for the rebel forces, who seized a swathe of territory along the eastern border last autumn and now say they control around 20 per cent of this huge central African country with 15,000 men under arms and non-Tutsi recruits joining daily.

Meanwhile, Zaire banned labour strikes and political rallies and warned that violators would be treated as enemy spies in an attempt to cope with mounting pressure to end its civil war.

Angered over an opposition-led strike that crippled the capital earlier this week, the government Friday also lashed out at public workers with an ultimatum: Be on the job at 8 a.m. sharp daily or face dismissal.

The crackdown came on the eve of a planned rally Saturday by chief opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi, who has called for President Mobutu Sese Seko to negotiate an end to the spreading rebellion in eastern Zaire. Recent rallies by Mr. Tshisekedi's followers have led to street fighting between protesters and soldiers.

The government dictates are aimed at silencing calls for peace talks with rebel leader Laurent Kabila and criticism of a struggling military counter-offensive, which the government portrays as a great success. There also have been international calls for negotiations.

The latest moves against the opposition, combined with the war, raise doubt about whether presidential elections would go forward in May as promised. Mr. Mobutu, who has ruled for 31 years, has been delaying promised elections since 1991.

The rebellion began in the fall when ethnic Tutsis, who had lived in eastern Zaire for decades were threatened with expulsion. It since has grown into a general rebellion with rebels demanding Mr. Mobutu's ouster.

Mr. Kabila received a hero's welcome Friday in Kalemie in his home province of Shaba, a portion of which was taken from government forces.

"Do you want me to liberate your country?" Mr. Kabila asked a crowd of 10,000 that packed on a lakeside soccer field.

"Yes," came the emphatic reply.

"Mobutu isn't capable of fighting me," Mr. Kabila boasted.

"Mobutu is only worried about protecting his riches, stolen from the people of Zaire."

The United Nations has warned that Zairean government forces were being reinforced by former Rwandan soldiers and Hutu militiamen from a refugee camp in eastern Zaire.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Friday that Mr. Kabila's rebels might attack the Tingi-Tingi camp, 130 kilometres east of Kisangani, to end the threat.

"It is not only a refugee camp," Mr. Kabila said earlier. "It is used as a headquarters of the former Rwandan army." The rebel leader said he has not decided whether to attack.

In a separate development, some 161 heavily armed Zairean soldiers, fleeing from a rebel advance in eastern Zaire, have arrived at Kibirizi Port on the shores of Lake Tanganyika in western Tanzania, police said Saturday.

Regional police commander in the lake town of Kigoma, Christopher Shekiondo, said the soldiers surrendered various weapons to the police.

The arms included 105 guns, 19 bombs, a grenade and thousands of rounds of ammunition.

Most of the soldiers, who arrived Thursday, were barefoot young men, dressed in rags, Mr. Shekiondo said. They were taken to Kigoma Central Police Station to be questioned.

Zaireans refugees are making it to Kigoma at the rate of around 1,000 a day.

U.N. officials said Friday there were 20,000 at the three transit centres in the town, and another 40,000 in a camp about 80 kilometres away, with another camp being built nearby.

### Albanians hold more protests against government

VLORE (R) — Cheated Pyramid scheme investors marched for a 11th day in this southern Albanian port city and others set out for nearby Fier to join demonstrations there.

"We want to go to Fier" and "let's march on Fier," a crowd of some 1,000 people shouted before the 40-kilometre trip north.

Scuffles broke out in Fier Friday when 100 riot police tried to keep about 5,000 protesters from the town's square.

Anti-government protests were held in about a dozen towns around Albania Friday to call on the right-wing government of Prime Minister Aleksander Meksi to reimburse investors and then resign.

Demonstrators in Fier, enraged after men attacked a protest Thursday, threw stones at police trying to keep them from marching Friday.

Police quickly gave ground, leaving an uneasy calm in the town. Tension was high ahead of expected protests Saturday.

Anti-government protesters have also erected barricades on the main north-south road between Fier and Vlore, cutting the link between Albania's second port and the capital in Tirana.

"We want to separate from the rest of Albania, we do not recognise (President Sali) Berisha any more," one protester shouted at motorists trying to get through.

Protesters in Vlore Saturday carried a picture of Arnur Rustemi, 33, who was shot dead during clashes Monday. The procession filed past the site of his killing, lighting candles and placing plastic flowers on the spot.

Protests were expected in numerous other towns Saturday, including Tepelene in the south and Mirdite in the north.

The anti-government protests show no sign of abating, with angry investors who lost millions of dollars in savings vowing to keep up pressure until the government quits.

Hundreds of protesters in the southern town of Gjirokastra lit candles Friday and formed the word "Vlore" in a show of solidarity.

Hundreds of protesters carrying bouquets of flowers, turned out in Elbasan, south of Tirana. One of the slogans of the main opposition forum for democracy is "with flowers, not stones."

Protests were reported in the port of Durres and in Cerkir.

Albania, Europe's poorest country, was swept by protests and riots after investors lost their savings in the failed investment schemes.

The schemes lured new money with offers of high interest rates and then used the cash to pay earlier investors. A large proportion of Albania's adults seem to have joined the schemes.

The companies often built holiday resorts, petrol stations, motels, supermarket chains and other high-profile investments, giving the illusion of success.

Their offices were often guarded by police and ministers joined in ground-breaking ceremonies, giving the impression that the schemes were sanctioned by the government.

That has led many investors to turn their wrath on Mr. Berisha and Mr. Meksi, blaming them for letting the dubious schemes evolve.

Opposition parties accuse him of using cash from the schemes to finance an election campaign last year.

The government, in turn, says opposition groups are trying to exploit the crisis. It impounded about \$300 million from two failed funds but steadfastly refused to use government money to reimburse luckless investors.

The head of the state savings bank, Bedri Collaku, said \$4.3 million had been distributed so far to investors in the failed Populli scheme. The government froze more than \$100 million of Populli's assets last month.

Some estimates put the losses from the collapsed schemes at \$2 billion, about the size of Albania's annual gross domestic product. Five national schemes have now officially gone bust.

Four more companies, which deny they are pyramid schemes, have drastically cut back their interest payments and have frozen depositors' assets.

### Bloody Sunday families see U.K. government

BELFAST (R) — Relatives of people killed by British troops on "Bloody Sunday" 25 years ago presented the British government with new evidence Friday to back up their demands for a fresh investigation.

"This was a very significant meeting," Irish peace broker John Hume told reporters after the relatives held a brief meeting with Britain's Northern Ireland secretary, Sir Patrick Mayhew.

Mr. Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, said he hoped the evidence would lead to a new British government investigation into one of the darkest days of Northern Ireland history.

Thirteen civil rights demonstrators died when British troops fired into a crowd. The soldiers told an official inquiry they thought they were under fire from Irish Republican Army guerrillas.

The inquiry exonerated them of any blame but families of those killed maintain that the shooting was unprovoked and want a British government inquiry and an official apology.

Michael McKinney, whose 27-year-old brother was among those killed, said new evidence gathered by a writer and a legal expert should clear his brother's name.

"We know that the British government told lies about them (the demonstrators), saying they had nail bombs and the government must remove that stigma for justice to be done," he told reporters.

Mr. Hume, member of parliament for the Londonderry area where the incident happened, said he hoped the new evidence would reopen the books on Bloody Sunday.

Britain says the shootings were tragic but needs new evidence if there is to be a new investigation.

Also present was author Don Mullan, whose recent book purports to prove that a sniper or snipers fired into the crowd from the walls of Londonderry.

Moves for a new inquiry have the backing of the Irish government. Britain's partner in the search for a lasting Northern Ireland settlement.

The Bloody Sunday incident shocked the province but was most keenly felt among the 40 per cent Irish nationalist Catholic community, from which the victims came.

Historians say it persuaded many young Catholics to join the underground IRA, which has fought a 28-year war to end British rule of the province.

### Cambodian defence chiefs bring calm to northwest

PHNOM PENH (R) — Calm returned to Cambodia's Battambang province Saturday after the country's co-defence ministers helped defuse tension between rival factions in the coalition government, officials said.

Co-Defence Ministers Tea Banh of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and Tea Chamrath of the royalist FUNCINPEC party chaired a meeting Friday in Battambang involving senior police and military officers and representatives of Cambodia's rival premiers.

"Everything is OK now, after the meeting," Tea Banh told Reuters Saturday, without elaborating.

The meeting was called to end several days of clashes in the rice-bowl province of Battambang in northwest Cambodia between CPP and FUNCINPEC forces, in which both sides received casualties.

Representatives of both parties, which formed an uneasy coalition after U.N.-run general elections in 1993, presented evidence to show the other had provoked the clashes, said Thlang Sovannarith, FUNCINPEC's deputy military commander of the region.

He said both sides had tried to block main roads leading into Battambang Friday.



will strengthen the position of those in Baku who feel the international community can pressure Armenia into giving in."



## Features

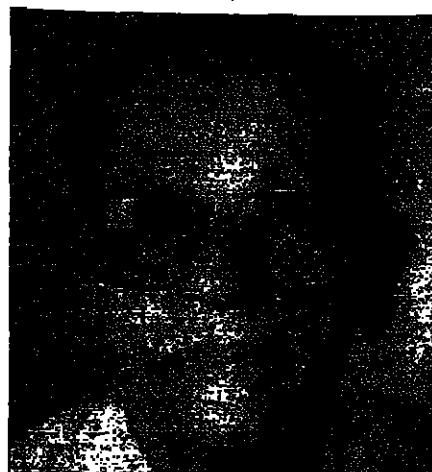
# Egypt's Mahfouz: The West is a world that is opening up

By Anton la Guardia

NAGUIB MAHFOUZ sits smoking and drinking coffee with his friends in a Cairo cafe, a scene that might have been taken from one of his books. The old man, frail, blind and almost deaf, is encircled by his followers. He sits impassively, wearing dark glasses and an old fashioned suit buttoned up around a turtle-neck sweater.

His friends take it in turn to bellow into his left ear, reading extracts from the latest newspapers and recounting events of the day. They wait for a heavy laugh to enliven his blank stare.

He could be Sheikh Abd-Rabbih Al-Ta'ih, a Sufi mystic who inhabits his last book, "Echoes of An Autobiography," and utters aphorisms such as: "The present is a light that flickers between two darknesses."



Naguib Mahfouz

Mahfouz is the unquestioned giant of Arabic culture. But his Nobel prize for literature in 1988 pushed him grudgingly into public view.

Last month was packed with ceremonies honouring his 85th birthday. The American University in Cairo inaugurated a literary

prize in his name, while the Cairo Film Festival gave out a Naguib Mahfouz award. But Mahfouz seemed almost detached from his public persona. He stayed away from all functions, protesting ill-health. He is jealous of his privacy, but the world insists on stealing his identity.

"During the festival there was a film from Azerbaijan based on one of your books," shouted Mohammad Al Kafri, an engineer.

"Azerbaijan? I've never heard of that country," replied Mahfouz with a touch of irritation. "It seems that they are a bit like us in Egypt. They make

films with no respect for copyright."

His birthday cake was in the form of a book, with the inscription, "Welcome Awlad Haretna," the title of the book that almost killed Mahfouz.

Until recently most of the Arab World had forgotten about Awlad Haretna, translated in English as "Children of Gebelawi". The allegory of the search for religious faith incorporating characters resembling Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, was serialised in Al Ahran in 1959 but was banned because of protests from militants.

When Mahfouz accepted the Nobel prize from the goddess West, militants denounced him as an apostate particularly after he defended Salman Rushdie against the Iranian death sentence.

In October 1994, he was stabbed twice in the neck as he left home to attend his

weekly Thursday literary evening in a coffee house in the centre of Cairo. A young militant who had never read Mahfouz's books confessed and was hanged after a military trial.

Mahfouz has been given a bodyguard by the government. But his writing hand was paralysed and he has not written a book since. He refuses to dictate. "I would love to write, but I am the sort of person who thinks with his hands," he told me during one of his gatherings in the Shepherd Hotel on the banks of the Nile.

The meetings are meant to be discreet to ensure the writer's safety. But the hotel's management could not resist placing a picture of Mahfouz on the wall of the lounge.

"Echoes of an Autobiography", which may be his last book, is being published in English this month. It is a collection of snippets of life, parables,

aphorisms, the sayings of a Sufi mystic and musings on old age and death.

Despite the title, it is far from an autobiography. Mahfouz said others have already sifted through enough personal details. "My life is very simple. There is nothing missing. But nobody wants to believe that." He pointed to Nadine Gordimer's introduction, which says: "The essence of a writer's being is in the work, not the personality."

Mahfouz is a paradox. He is the best-known Arab writer, but reveals little about his private life; he modelled his masterpiece, of social realism, the "Cairo Trilogy", on the great Western novels, but has hardly ever left Egypt; he writes about Cairo's urban society but shuns its colloquial language in favour of classical Arabic; and despite his popularity, he visibly dislikes the more

militant strains of Arab nationalism which infects other intellectuals.

One of his few trips was to London in 1991 for an operation. "I would have loved to have travelled. At first I did not have the opportunity. Later, when I grew up, I had a job and started in literature, travelling would have been a burden on my work I would have hated it."

Mahfouz has no doubt that it was right to throw the British out of Egypt, but acknowledges that they left a legacy of "civilisation." In youth Mahfouz flirted with socialism and, it seems, almost lost his faith in Islam and adopted science as the religion of the modern age. But he was never a militant and, unlike many of his intellectual colleagues, was never imprisoned.

Mahfouz avoids confrontation. Even the notorious "Children of Gebelawi"

was written only in allegorical form. Militants, he said, could not differentiate between literary symbols and reality.

Mahfouz insists he remains a believer. "I match science and religion. I hope God agrees," he said. "I think that science without human values could be evil instead of good."

He suddenly became animated, even scornful, on the subject of the Arab World's dual conflict with Israel and the West. "Those who are against the West are trying to shield themselves from a world that is opening up. Those countries that are against Western civilisation and democracy, where do they get their arms from? The West. Where do they get science and medicine? The West. And what about the engineering skills to build? The West."

Daily Telegraph

## Asian cities choking themselves to death

By Tom Wright  
Reuters

JAKARTA — Asia's burgeoning cities are choking themselves to death and unless they take a new approach to development, overcrowding could threaten future economic growth in the region, urban planners and analysts say.

"The problem with Asian cities is just they've grown so fast," said Vishaka Desai, convenor of a conference on "the future of Asia's cities" held in Jakarta recently.

"There is no precedent. The growth has got ahead of them," Mrs. Desai, who is vice-president for cultural programmes at the New

York-based Asia Society, told Reuters.

Meeting in the sprawling metropolis of the Indonesian capital, delegates had first-hand experience of one of Asia's most overcrowded cities as they searched for solutions to the region's urban problems.

The gathered experts were unanimous that cities across Asia are near breaking point.

"Essentially, the cities will choke themselves to death. It is in the economic interests of the cities to deal with the impact of rapid development," Mrs. Desai said.

An Asian problem? Liu Thai-ker, a Singa-

pore-based architect, said it was valid to talk about the crisis facing Asian cities because, although culturally diverse, most urban centres in the region suffered similar problems. "There is such a thing as common characteristics of the big Asian cities. You have rapid growth, a large population size and limited land and you have to find a way to build housing in a rapid way but with quality assurance," Mr. Liu said.

United Nations figures show that between 1990-1995 Asia's 13 largest cities grew at an average rate of 2.96 per cent a year compared to 1.26 per cent in Europe and the United States.

Jakarta, a city of almost 10 million, grew at 4.35 per cent in the same five-year period.

The United Nations estimates that by 2000, 13 of the world's 21 mega-cities of more than 10 million people will be in Asia.

Mr. Liu said urban growth had been a catalyst for Asia's much-heralded economic achievements, but insufficient planning meant it was now running out of control.

He said the result in many Asian cities was 24-hour-a-day traffic chaos, rampant pollution and wasteful land use, compounded by an ever-increasing urban population.

Mrs. Desai said they had

chosen Jakarta to host the conference because it embodied all of these problems.

Delegates and speakers had to be accommodated near the conference venue because they feared gridlocked traffic would otherwise have disrupted proceedings.

A question of priorities

Mr. Liu said population pressure meant governments should take a more planned approach in dealing with concrete issues of providing housing, hospitals, schools and other infrastructure.

"Most cities don't have enough well-trained plan-

ners because the pace of growth is just far too fast," Mr. Liu said, adding that corruption often led to misuse of land and resources.

He added it was important to be pragmatic in the formulation of a blue-print for Asian city development.

"It is very hard to talk to a western planner and say we have no choice but to build high-rise housing. They cannot understand it and therefore don't need to accept it... But where do you get all the land?" Mr. Liu said.

The danger of talking about cities is talking about beauty first," he said, adding that only after providing basic services could Asian cities afford the luxu-

ry of thinking about aesthetics.

But for South Korean architect Kwak Young Hoon, chief planner for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the main problem with Asian cities is that they are becoming homogenous and characterless.

He said the development of Jakarta had been driven by economic rather than social considerations. "What is wrong with Jakarta is that it could be Bangkok, Seoul or anywhere," Mr. Kwak said.

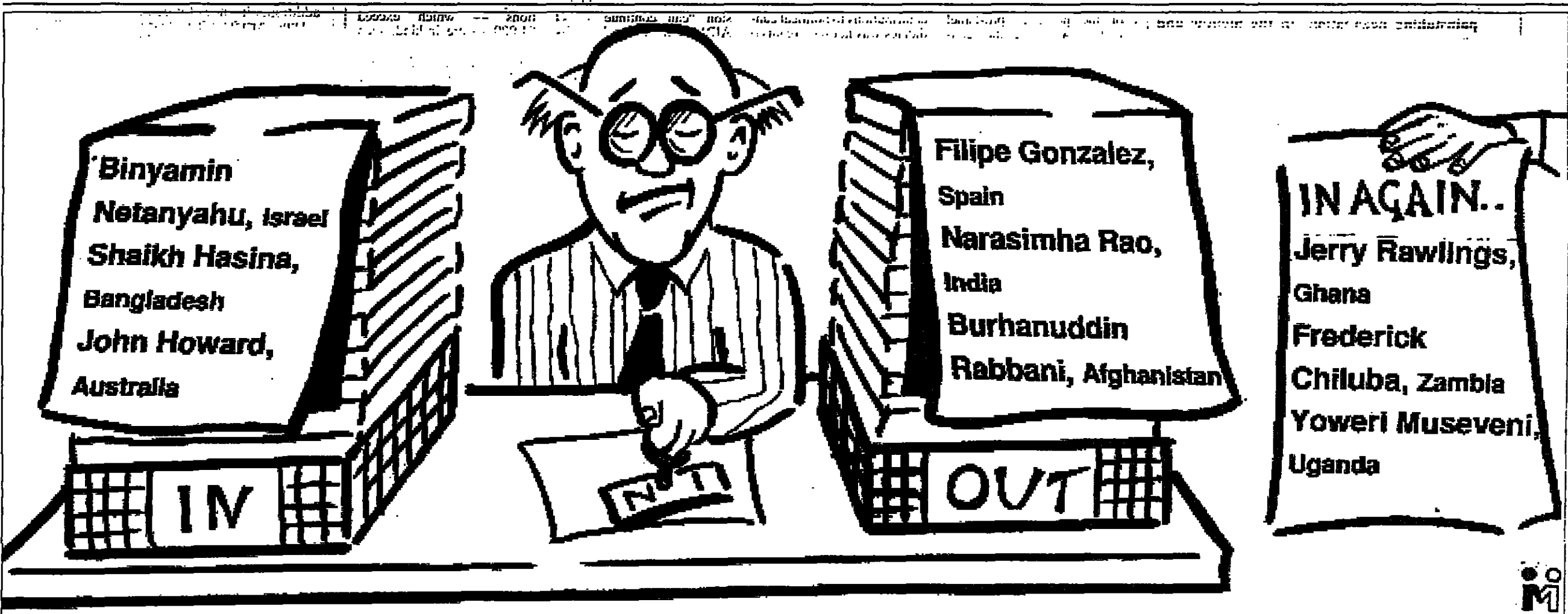
Adi Sasono, chairman of the Jakarta-based Centre for Information and Development Studies (CIDES), said city planning was aimed at fulfilling the needs

of the rich and had ignored the mass of workers that line Asia's crowded streets.

"City planning is more sensitive to the expansion of the economy of wants. The economy of needs is the economy of poor people," Mr. Sasono said.

Mrs. Desai said Asian cities of the future would have to take the needs of the poor into account. Multi-nationals should be persuaded that sustainable development and not just profit margins are important.

"We have to tell them: 'If you don't create affordable housing where is your cheap labour going to come from?'" she said.



## Syria ready to restart talks 'tomorrow'

(Continued from page 1)

concessions promised by previous administrations.

"The Syrian position is clear and we are ready to resume negotiations from the point where the talks stopped," Mr. Sharaa said.

In Washington, Mr. Netanyahu said talks could be revived without conditions and that he was ready to meet with President Assad.

Mr. Sharaa said Syria was waiting for details from the United States on Mr. Netanyahu's offer.

Once the two sides sit down together, they can press any demand, Mr. Netanyahu said Friday. "If President Assad does prove, soon I hope, that he chooses the path to peace, he will find us reasonable and cooperative partners," he said.

"If he chooses the path of violence, he will leave

us no choice but to defend ourselves, and to defend our interests," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"It ought to be that (Assad) should be interested in the peace of Syria's children and the future generations' destiny as I am for Israel's children and our future," the Israeli leader said on NBC Television. "You'll have to interview him and ask him 'why don't you just come to the peace table?'"

Mr. Netanyahu declined to spell out the details of the "creative formula" he said he supports for peace talks. Asked when he would meet with Mr. Assad, he replied, "yesterday."

"I'd rather not engage in the polemics of preconditions," he said. "In point of practice, I don't think we can get pretty far if (anti-Israeli) terrorism continues after we start the

negotiations. But I'm not in the business of putting up preconditions."

Based on undisclosed proposals Mr. Netanyahu brought with him to Washington, President Clinton said Thursday he was encouraged peace talks with Syria could be revived.

"Both nations want to conclude a peace agreement, and the United States will work with both nations to try to achieve that goal," Mr. Clinton said after meeting with Mr. Netanyahu at the White House.

Mr. Netanyahu, speaking at a dinner Thursday night at the Israeli embassy, was similarly upbeat. "I, too, am confident we can reach our goal," he said.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, in a toast at the dinner, assured the prime minister: "We will be at your side. You

can count on the United States."

A Syrian newspaper said Saturday Mr. Netanyahu's talks with President Clinton did not achieve their goal of advancing the Middle East peace process.

"The Clinton-Netanyahu meetings did not allow for the resumption of Syrian-Israeli peace talks, although this subject dominated their discussions," the official newspaper Tishrin said.

The American president reiterated his commitment to guarantee the security of Israel and Netanyahu repeated his intransigent position on his refusal to withdraw from the Golan Heights," the paper added.

"Netanyahu pretended to bring new ideas aimed at restarting the negotiations, but the truth quickly came out, because he repeated his call to resume negotiations without preconditions,

casting aside the principles of the Madrid conference," Tishrin said.

The 1991 Middle East peace conference in Madrid was based on Israel exchanging occupied land for normalised relations with its Arab neighbours.

"Netanyahu's current policy will only lead to destruction, without a doubt, because Syria will not take up new talks from ground zero, which would result in nothing," the paper said.

According to the Israeli newspaper Yediot Ahronot, Mr. Netanyahu told both Mr. Clinton and Ms. Albright that "you must make it clear to Assad that he must think of other options — the option of a total withdrawal from the Golan does not exist from our point of view."

## Regent reiterates Jordan's rejection of Israeli claim

(Continued from page 1)

inaccurate and misleading information that sometimes appears harms the country and its interests.

The Prince cited as an example of "misleading" information reports that Jordanian capital was fleeing the country. He said he had checked this report which he learnt of during his European tour and found it to be incorrect.

Asked about Hamas leader Musa Abu Marzouk's case and the case of Jordanian prisoners in Kuwait, he said judicial authorities in the United States and Jordan were in contact on possible extradition of Mr. Abu Marzouk.

Arab mediation is underway over the Jordanians imprisoned in Kuwait, he said.

Prince Hassan said Jordan had made major achievements, citing a recent statement by the IMF which offered Jordan \$52 million in additional credit in recognition of its economic performance.

He said European countries continue to offer aid and support to Jordan and are willing to help in settling basic issues like Jerusalem and refugees and the creation of free trade in the region.

"In the coming few days we are scheduled to witness the resumption of Jordanian-Palestinian committee meetings on free trade which aims at ending Palestinian subjugation to the Israeli hegemony," he said. We want to remove the barriers and enlarge the market and attract investments for the Jordanian and Palestinian people and to help in the process of economic integration in the Arab World."

Earlier, Prince Hassan briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of his visits and talks with the leaders of France and Switzerland.

# Arab oil earnings hit 14-year high in 1996

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab oil export earnings in 1996 climbed to their highest level in 14 years due to a surge in crude prices caused mainly by a prolonged winter in the northern hemisphere, bankers said Thursday.

The income of the Saudi Arabia and other Arab oil producers totalled around \$112 billion in 1996, nearly \$15 billion above their crude revenues in 1995, the bankers said, citing official figures.

"The 1996 income is the highest in nominal terms since 1982. The increase was of course because of the large rise in oil prices over 1995 as there was no big change in the size of their exports," a Riyadh-based banker said.

Figures provided by the

Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) showed the Arab oil export earnings stood at around \$142.6 billion in 1982. They hit an all-time high of \$213.7 billion in 1981.

The high earnings in those years were because prices shot above \$30 and production by Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude supplier, peaked at nearly 12 million barrels per day (bpd) compared with eight million bpd at present.

Bankers said Saudi Arabia, which controls a quarter of the world's oil, earned around \$43 billion from oil exports of nearly 6.2 million bpd. The earnings were higher by nearly \$8 billion above 1995.

The two other major producers, Kuwait and the

United Arab Emirates (UAE), also boosted income by nearly \$4 billion while an extra \$1.5 billion were earned by Libya and \$1 billion by Qatar and Oman.

"Naturally, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states benefited more than other Arab countries from the high prices as crude exports form the bulk of their exports and their budgets are based mainly on oil sales," a UAE banker said.

Arab states produced more than 18 million bpd of oil in 1996, of which around 16 million bpd were exported, mostly to Japan and the West.

Crude prices surged to an average \$20 in 1996 from \$16.8 in 1995 due to the absence of sanction-hit Iraq from the market and a sharp

decline in Western oil inventories caused by a bitter cold spell.

A steady price decline after the oil boom of early 1980s has drained the coffers of Arab countries, with their income shrinking to around \$83 billion in 1985 before hitting its lowest level of \$51.5 billion in 1986. Oil prices tumbled below \$10 in 1986 as a result of a production war within the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

"In real terms, the Arab oil income last year was not much better than in the previous years given the growing inflation rates and the weakening purchasing power of the U.S. dollar," a UAE banker said.

"I do not have precise figures, but I think the 1996

income accounts for less than one third of the 1980 income in real dollar terms," he added.

Oil prices are still as high as they were in the first quarter of 1996 and some Gulf producers have indicated in their budgets that prices will remain firm through the year.

Bankers said the price improvement had offset the lack of any increase in the production of Gulf states, which had hoped to take advantage of a steady growth in world demand to boost their market share.

But most of the increase in global consumption has been met by other producers, mainly from outside the 11-nation OPEC.

## GCC states to raise cigarette tariff to 100%

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have agreed to raise customs tariffs on cigarette imports to 70 per cent this year and are planning to reach 100 per cent in the year 2000, Oman's health minister said.

Quoted by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Khaleej, Ali Mohammad Musa said the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) had already enforced a tariff of 50 per cent on cigarette and tobacco imports.

"We have coordinated with the finance ministers to raise that tariff to 70 per cent," he said. "The health ministers have also agreed that the tariff should be

raised to 100 per cent in the year 2000."

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE — have gradually boosted duties on tobacco over the past years in a campaign to cut consumption and finance educational programmes about smoking hazards.

GCC sources said the increases were also part of attempts in member states to boost non-oil income to diversify their economies.

Dealers estimated the oil-rich GCC countries, which have a population of around 22 million, import nearly 30 billion cigarettes per year, worth more than \$1 billion.

## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You have some deep desires today which need to be clarified and brought down to more workable forms. Spend the evening with your loved ones and have a pleasant time together in a special location which you both enjoy.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) A group activity to which you've been invited to today can be quite beneficial if you handle the situation correctly. Don't stay out too late this evening, since you need the rest to handle any situation in the days ahead.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) A fancy social gathering later this evening can yield some great business connections if you handle the situation correctly and this can be quite beneficial. A credit matter will be resolved to your advantage.

**MOONCHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) A trip you've been considering should be planned today, and made soon before you lose out on the opportunity. Make sure that your wardrobe is in good shape in the eventuality you are given a special assignment.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Rely on your intuition today when dealing with your mate so that there won't be any difficulty. Concentrate on finishing up some troubling business affairs which have been put aside for some time and need to be tackled.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Don't attend today any social functions alone, since there will be strength in numbers. You should contact some close friends who will gladly accompany you. The days ahead look very bright for you if you are cautious.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) You may want to spend some time today putting your home in order and perhaps purchase and art object or two or make a good impression. Get some rest tonight, for the days ahead may be stressful in your business activities.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Get into some amusements which can alleviate the tensions you are under today, and be sure to bring some good friends along, as well. Later this evening will be a good time to see out the advice of knowledgeable people.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Put those home improvements ideas into action today, and then invite some charming friends in for the evening. Get some rest tonight with your loved ones and prepare for a very hectic time in the days ahead.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) You are aware of what others expect of you today, so don't let them down. The evening can be a delightful one if you choose guests carefully and make sure the conversations are structured for career activities.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) The newspaper can give you some fantastic ideas today, provided you read carefully and keep an open mind to everything it contains. Be sure to drive carefully while on the highway and avoid any difficulties.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Be careful in pursuing your personal goals. A good friend can render some great assistance to you today. Pay those neglected bills so that you can be up to a proper level of financial stability and not in a disastrous situation.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx.

## Sweden gets OECD warning on high wages

PARIS. (AFP) — The OECD has commended Sweden for its "remarkable" progress in cutting its budget deficit and curbing inflation, but warned that high wage settlements for 1996-98 could weaken growth prospects.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in a survey of the Swedish economy, said it was "well placed" to join European economic and monetary union (EMU) from the start on the basis of the Maastricht treaty criteria.

It said the budget deficit, which peaked at 12.3 per cent of GDP in 1993, at the height of the recession, was cut to an estimated 3.8 per cent for 1996 and should fall further to 2.5 per cent this year, well below the three per cent Maastricht limit.

And it considered that Sweden's financial market structures should be "well-suited" to take part in a common monetary policy.

But the OECD cautioned the Stockholm government

that EMU would require "a wage formation process that reflects underlying productivity and employment prospects" and a re-coupling of the formal education system to meet the need for increased workplace skills.

It stressed that broad action would be needed to increase labour market flexibility, including a widening of wage differentials to provide better incentives for human capital formation.

Sweden's nominal wages were currently increasing "significantly faster than the average European rate" although the jobs rate remained close to its historical highs, the report pointed out.

It estimated the average rate for 1996 at 7.9 per cent of the workforce, and projected to fall slowly to perhaps 7.2 per cent by 1998.

Counting those participating in active labour market programmes (more than 12 per cent of workers were unemployed last year and the overall total could rise

to 12.5 per cent in 1998 because of an expected increased enrolment in active labour market programmes, it said.

The high jobless level nevertheless failed to restrain wage increases negotiated in the 1995 wage round for periods of two to three years, meaning that wages are set to grow faster than productivity gains.

"If the next round of wage bargaining gives a similar result... a prolonged weakness of the economy is likely to occur" which might leave companies few options but to shed labour to contain costs, the OECD cautioned.

It said the likely consequences of the latest wage round were already visible in the shape of "declining growth in export shares and in investment."

The OECD nevertheless foresaw a continued improvement in Sweden's export market prospects as a factor contributing to stronger domestic economic activity.

It projected Swedish GDP growth to pick up from just over 1.7 per cent in 1996 to about 2.2 per cent in 1997, levelling off at around 2.1 per cent in 1998, with consumer price inflation rising moderately from about 1.5 per cent to 2.25 per cent.

The report, which stressed that Swedish authorities had been able to establish the credibility of their anti-inflationary monetary stance, said stability had been underpinned by growing financial market confidence in Sweden's deficit cutting strategy.

While both short and long term interest rates had come down substantially, there was still a premium on Swedish rates, of some 150 basis points compared with similar German rates.

The report said this might reflect uncertainty in financial markets as to whether the Swedish parliament, in a vote scheduled for the end of 1997, would decide in favour of participation in the first round of monetary union.

## Seek jobs abroad, Chirac tells French youth

BOULOGNE-BILLA COURT. France (AFP) — President Jacques Chirac urged French youth Monday to give more consideration to going abroad to find work, as he reiterated his "crusade" to fight record unemployment.

Young people "must not be

afraid to leave the country" to find work, he told a group of job-seekers at a project west of Paris designed to use computer technology to help find employment.

"French people, in general, do not go abroad enough," said Mr. Chirac, who had promised to make jobs his "priority of priorities" when he took office in May 1995.

Official figures last month put the jobless total at 12.7 per cent, and unemployment is expected to go up before it comes down. Figures for under 25s are even worse.

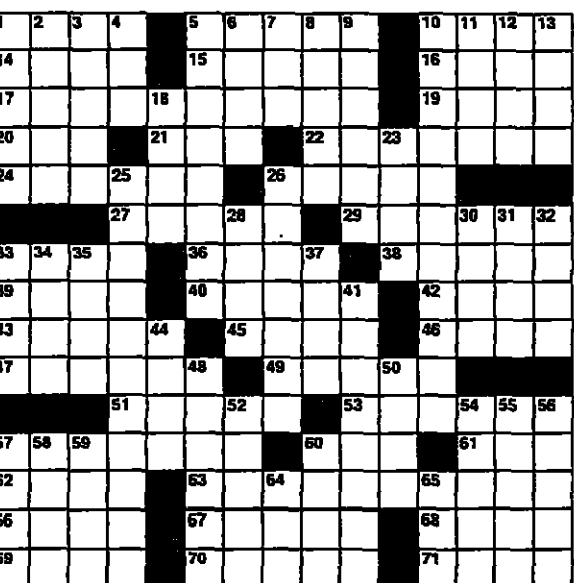
In an interview Sunday with

the Journal du Dimanche newspaper Mr. Chirac pointed out that, while 4.3 million Italians and three million Germans worked outside their own country, only 1.7 million French did so. On Monday, Mr. Chirac again stressed that 1997 will be "the year of jobs for young people" and called for a "crusade."

"We must mobilise all means: the state, employment services, local authorities who must play a key role... employers, unions and associations. I want 1997 to see genuine progress in terms of jobs for young people," he said.

## THE Daily Crossword

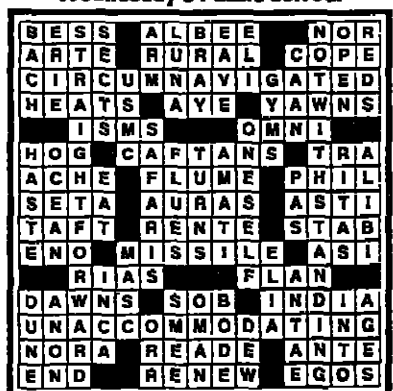
- ACROSS
- 1 Friendly conversation
  - 5 Native Israeli
  - 10 Money
  - 14 Resort on the Adriatic
  - 15 German war craft
  - 16 — of expertise
  - 17 Below
  - 19 Oodles
  - 20 Sense of self
  - 21 Model Carol
  - 22 — heaven (state of bliss)
  - 24 Madrid matron
  - 26 Copy machine additive
  - 27 Role for Sly
  - 29 Reach for
  - 33 Learning Tower town
  - 36 Sound of disdain
  - 38 "Prince of —"
  - 39 Computer picture
  - 40 Unbroken
  - 42 Spring
  - 43 Valentino's dance
  - 45 — Chatterley
  - 46 Actress
  - 47 Lansbury
  - 48 Puccini opera
  - 51 A Jackson
  - 53 Cuddled
  - 57 Carried along
  - 60 Cliche
  - 61 Goof
  - 62 Son of Jacob
  - 63 Place for smoothing
  - 66 Oil cartel
  - 67 Toss out
  - 68 Part of the eye
  - 69 Had on
  - 70 William Butler —
  - 71 Recolors
- DOWN
- 1 Sherlock's finds
  - 2 Depend
  - 3 Attach
  - 4 From head to —
  - 5 Tanning devices
  - 6 Lend a hand
  - 7 Feather scarf
  - 8 Role for Dustin
  - 9 Greek goddess
  - 10 Butterfly-to-be
  - 11 Graceland — middle name
  - 12 Faxed
  - 13 Corned beef —
  - 18 — avis
  - 23 Sleeveless jacket
  - 25 Fruit drink
  - 26 Not in time
  - 28 Period of prosperity
  - 30 Thought
  - 31 Enjoy a book
  - 32 Catch sight of
  - 33 Pocket bread
  - 34 — do
  - 35 anything...
  - 36 Melody
  - 37 Hawaiian city
  - 41 Dinner endings
  - 44 — Cassini
  - 48 Scarlett's first love
  - 50 Beds
  - 52 Range
  - 54 Weepy
  - 55 Kovacs or Pyle
  - 56 Frog
  - 57 Huff and puff
  - 58 Certain merchandise
  - 59 Finished subdivision
  - 60 Religious
  - 64 By way of
  - 65 Pot cover



by Norma Steinberg

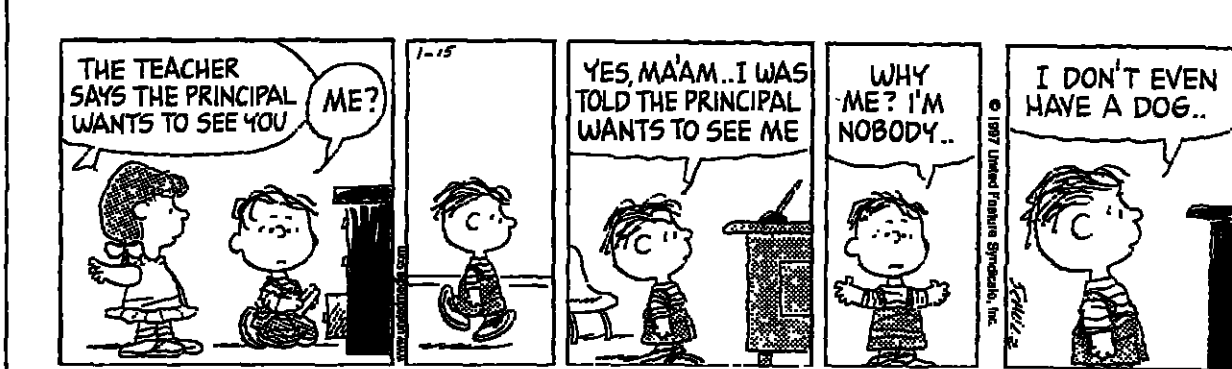
02/06/97

## Wednesday's Puzzle solved:



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## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n' Jeff



**Busi**

**Surve**

**will b**

**THE BETTE**

**JUNIB**

**MYHRE**

**RANGL**

**REUMED**

**MABOOB**

**Answer: AT**







## Rusedski upsets Chang in San Jose

SAN JOSE (R) — Britain's Greg Rusedski fired 15 aces on the way to upsetting second-seed Michael Chang 7-6 (7-4) 6-4 on Friday to move into a semifinal with Andre Agassi at the \$303,000 Sybase Open tennis tournament.

Agassi, gaining momentum with every match in his first tournament back on the tour since being whistled out of Hanover, Germany, at the ATP championships in November, steamrolled Australian qualifier Grant Doyle 6-2 6-1.

Top seed Pete Sampras also advanced to the semifinals with a quick 6-2 6-3 victory over American Chris Woodruff. Sampras will meet his friend Todd Martin, who defeated sixth-seed Richey Reneberg 6-1 6-4 Friday.

Rusedski, who has served 43 aces in three matches, had his diminutive opponent fully stretched out while attempting to keep his heavy kick serves from bouncing over his head.

"I gave up too many points on his second serve," said Chang, who owned a 6-1 record against the 23-year-old Rusedski entering the match. "I should have stepped in a little bit more. That's normally where I hurt him the most."

In their seven prior meetings, the two had played seven tiebreakers, with Chang winning five of them.

But on Friday, the spindly Rusedski was the player who took charge. Down 3-4 in the tiebreak, the game left-hander dashed to net on four straight occasions, knifing three volley winners and forcing Chang to go for too much on a return of serve.

While Rusedski is primarily known as a one-weapon player with his rocket serves, he says that he grows more versatile by the

day.

"I'm a much more complete player than last year," Rusedski said. "I'm returning better, volleying better and, most importantly, my mental game is better."

"I'm not letting things get to me. That's the difference between the guys at the top like Chang and Sampras and the guys ranked between number 50 and 100, they keep on an even keel."

The 39th-ranked player Rusedski faced three break points in the second set and responded in typical fashion, with two aces and a service winner.

"It's a matter of focusing on every point," Rusedski said.

Agassi and Rusedski haven't met in three years. Agassi owns a 3-0 record against him.

"You never know when Andre is going to hit the level he was at when he was number one in '95," he said. "He can have days when he is just tremendous. But if I serve well and I'm patient and aggressive enough, I have a good opportunity."

Agassi said he is seeing ball really well and is also looking forward to the match.

"There will be a lot of fireballs out there, off his serve and hopefully off my returns."

After beating Woodruff, Sampras extended his amazing winning streak against American players. Sampras, the 1996 Australian Open champion, has won 21 matches in a row against his compatriots. His last loss was to Chang in the 1995 ATP championships.

"I was concerned about a letdown coming off Australia, but my coach, Paul Annacone and I, decided to try and put the confidence I got there to good use."



Monaco attacker Victor Ikpeba (R) fights for the ball with Stephane Samson of Le Havre during their French league match. Monaco won the match 3-0 (Reuters photo)

## Monaco race clear of the field

PARIS (AFP) — French League leaders Monaco stood seven points clear Friday after hammering Le Havre 3-0 with a brace from Brazilian Sonny Anderson and another from Nigerian Viktor Ikpeba as Jean Tigana's men again showed their French title credentials.

On Thursday, Cup Winners Cup holders Paris Saint Germain had gone to within four points of the Monegasques by notching their first league win since November 29 with a 2-1 win at struggling Lens. That match was marred by a linesman being struck on the head by a bottle thrown by a spectator.

Bastia stay in third spot despite not playing. Their match at Caen was postponed following flooding, while fellow UEFA Cup contenders Bordeaux saw

their match at Guingamp called off for the same reason.

Strasbourg took advantage by beating Nice 3-1 to go fourth within two points of Bastia after a double from David Zitelli, who took his tally for the season to 16.

The match was delayed 20 minutes because of heavy rain which rendered the pitch almost unplayable.

Marseille, who have had an inconsistent season, went a goal down on 27 minutes at home to Lille but roared back with five second half efforts. Marc Libbra and Xavier Gravelaine both notched a brace with Olivier Echouafni netting the other.

David Garcia had put the visitors in front with a low drive past Andreas Kopke. Metz's UEFA Cup hopes suffered a blow when they lost 1-0 at Montpellier, for

whom Franck Sauzee.

On Thursday, troubled PSG, who were eight points clear at the top before the new year, recovered from a goal by Lens' Guinean striker Aboubacar Camara to take the points with second-half goals from French international Patrice Loko and an imperious header by Brazilian playmaker Rai.

Lens, on a terrible run with just five points from their past ten matches, could face tough league sanctions after one of their fans hurled a bottle of water that knocked out a linesman.

The match was stopped for 10 minutes before he returned to complete the match.

Reigning champions Auxerre were meanwhile held to a goalless draw in Nantes.

## Zola eager for Wembley repeat

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola is eager for a repeat Wembley appearance following his midweek goal in the famous stadium which earned Italy their World Cup win over England.

Zola, who hit home in the 18th minute despite a deflection off Sol Campbell's boot, has an FA Cup fifth round trip to Leicester on Sunday with a further Wembley visit in view.

Zola may have been Italy's hero but he needs to turn on that type of form again if he is to play the key part he hopes to against Martin O'Neill's injury and suspension-hit side at Filbert street.

"I just hope I can go to Wembley again this season," said Zola.

"I know we have this opportunity in the Cup and I want to take it."

"Wembley is a wonderful stadium an unbelievable place with a great atmosphere, as we found out this week."

"I was so glad to get the chance to play there, even happier to score, and would love to go back there again."

The Wembley goal, of course, was one Zola will never forget, and one he accepts could make him more than a little unpopular for the rest of this season, especially from rival fans.

"Perhaps the other fans might make me pay the price for that goal, but it was very important for

me and my country and a price I'm willing to pay," he said.

"I hope I don't find that sort of treatment off-putting. If I have to take it, I will. I'm a player, that's my job."

While Zola will almost certainly be part of an unchanged side, there will again be no place for compatriot Gianluca Vialli.

And Leicester boss O'Neill has all sorts of problems.

Former Chelsea midfielder Muzzy Izzet, Northern Ireland's Neil Lennon, England under-21 striker Emile Heskey and new defender Mart Elliott are all suspended, with Pontus Karmark, Colin Hill and Mike Whitlow also out.

O'Neill admitted the news was "demoralising" and it will make his task in deciding how to deal with Zola even more important.

Glen Hoddle paid the price for not marking the striker in midweek, and O'Neill admitted he was weighing up whether to learn from Hoddle's painful Wembley lesson.

"It's something I must give a lot of consideration to," admitted O'Neill, who also has doubts over Scott Taylor, Jamie Lawrence and Steve Walsh.

"We've only done it against McManaman before but Zola is another special player who warrants it."

## Dortmund go top

COLOGNE (AFP) — Champions Borussia Dortmund made it a great start as the Bundesliga returned after the winter break thrashing Bayer Leverkusen 3-1 at home on Friday — despite Bayer's coach having stated his side were a rocket waiting to explode.

Dortmund, bidding for a third successive championship, went top by a point from Bayern Munich, who play Sankt Pauli on Saturday, while Leverkusen stay in third, three points off the pace.

The champions fought back from being a goal down, scored by Paulo Sergio in the seventh minute, but German international playmaker Andy Moller equalised 10 minutes later and then Swiss striker Stephane Chapuisat just 45 seconds into the second-half put them ahead.

Moller, back in the team after a bout of flu, scored the third in the last minute of the game to round off an impressive win.

The result left Bayer coach Christoph Daum with a red face after he had compared his side's winter preparations to a rocket whose fuse was building up for a massive lift-off.

FC Cologne, who have declared an interest in Karlsruhe playmaker Thomas Haessler, secured a 2-0 home win over struggling Fortuna Dusseldorf. The victory lifts Cologne two places to fifth.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Germans list 21 cities as Cup hosts

BONN (AFP) — The German Football Federation (DFB) has listed 21 cities as potential host sites for the 2006 World Cup, for which Germany is officially bidding. DFB official Engelbert Nelle said Friday. Reports documenting the cities' respective facilities are expected to be handed to the DFB by May 1st. Berlin is one of the cities hoping to be awarded matches if Germany wins its fight to stage the tournament for the first time since 1974. But local authorities will first have to renovate the capital's Olympic stadium, a project Nelle believes will cost some \$360 million. World soccer body FIFA has to choose a host nation for the 2006 tournament by 2000. Both Germany and England are vying to be selected as hosts.

### Greek sprinter equals Bailey's best

ATHENS (AFP) — Greek sprinter Charis Papadakis produced an astonishing run here on Friday timing 6.51 seconds in the 60 metres to equal the world's best performance indoors this season. Papadakis, competing at the Greek World Indoor Championship trials, equalled the time set by Canada's 100 metres record holder Donovan Bailey last week in Japan. The World Indoor Championships are to be held in Paris in March.

### Burns still keen on Annoni

GLASGOW (AFP) — Celtic manager Tommy Burns on Friday insisted he still hoped to land Roma defender Enrico Annoni, despite disagreement on the player's valuation. Chairman Fergus McCann has baulked at Roma's asking price of 400,000 pounds, some 120,000 more than the Glasgow club are reported to have offered for 30-year-old Annoni. The Italians now want McCann to go to Italy and reopen negotiations. In the meantime, Burns said he was "still confident" a deal could be thrashed out, saying that "the main thing for me is that the player wants to come here and is happy." Annoni could move for nothing in the summer but Burns wants a signing now with his side seven points behind eternal rivals Rangers in the premier division title race. Celtic's Portuguese striker Jorge Cadete meanwhile could be on his way to Benfica, with the Lisbon side reputedly set to table a bid for the 26-goal striker.

### Etcheverry quits national team

LA PAZ (AFP) — Bolivian striker Marco "the devil" Etcheverry, the first man to be sent off in the opening match of a World Cup finals, retired from international football here on Friday because he was fed up with criticism from the public. Etcheverry, who failed to score in the 1-1 home draw with Chile in Wednesday's World Cup qualifier, complained that he was bearing the brunt of the criticism both by the press and the supporters. "Everyone is picking on me as if I was the only player on the pitch," Etcheverry said. Etcheverry, who announced his retirement on the day of his wedding, claimed his place in footballing history when he was sent off only four minutes after coming on as substitute in Bolivia's match with Germany in the 1994 World Cup finals. The Bolivian authorities refused to comment on his retirement and said they would learn more later on when they attended the Washington D.C. United player's wedding party.

### Santoro ousts Rosset

MARSEILLE (AFP) — Former French Davis Cup player Fabrice Santoro continued his comeback revival here Saturday when he reached the semifinals of the ATP tournament here by beating fourth-seed Marc Rosset of Switzerland 3-6, 6-3, 7-5. Santoro, who slumped out of the top-100 rankings in recent seasons, scored a 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 win. In Friday's other matches Sweden's second-seed Thomas Enqvist had to go the distance to put out Hendrik Dreekman 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 while Spain's former French Open champion Sergi Bruguera defeated Andrei Chesnokov of Russia 6-3, 6-2. Meanwhile top-seed Marcelo Rios recovered after dropping the first set to beat Magnus Larsson of Sweden 3-6, 7-5, 6-4.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
& YANNAR HIRSH

### SPOT THE ERRORS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH  
44  
Q A 4 3  
Q J 10 6 5 5  
A 10

WEST  
A 10 3 2  
Q 8 8  
Q 5 2  
J 9 6 4

EAST  
A 9 7  
K 7 6 5 2  
A 7  
7 5 2

SOUTH  
A K Q 5  
Q J 10  
Q 9 4  
K Q 8 3

The bidding:  
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST  
1NT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Nine of ♣

Study the bidding and play of this hand. Did anyone commit an error? If so, who?

North's decision to jump to three on trump was eminently correct. With a six-card minor, a relatively balanced hand and 11 high-card points, there was no point to trying for an 11-trick contract in five diamonds.

West struck gold with the heart

opening lead. Declarer played low from dummy. East took the king and returned the suit. Declarer won and started on diamonds. Since East had only one entry, the hearts were on the wire as declarer wrapped up 10 tricks.

The most glaring error, as so often is the case, occurred at the very first trick. Instead of rining with the king of hearts, East should encourage with the seven. Now West can win the first diamond and play another heart, and whether declarer rises with the ace or ducks, the defenders have set up the heart suit while East still has the ace of diamonds as an entry.

However, declarer should foresee this defense and take action to frustrate it. Declarer has only eight fast tricks and cannot count on any in diamonds, so the ninth trick has to come from somewhere else, and the club suit offers the only hope.

Assuming South is allowed to win the opening lead in hand, declarer should then lead a club, and finesse the ten! When that wins, nine tricks are in the bank. After cashing the ace of clubs, declarer enters the closed hand with a spade and scores three spade tricks, two hearts and four clubs.

## Becker withdraws, Muster, Courier advance to Dubai semis

DUBAI (AP) — Boris Becker made an unexpected exit from the quarterfinals of the \$1 million Dubai Open Friday without even taking the court.

The German, ranked 13th in the world, withdrew at the eleventh hour citing a wrist injury. That gave top seed Goran Ivanisevic a welcome bye into the semifinals.

The Croatian, who is ranked No. 2 in world ratings, will meet Czech seed-player Jiri Novak in Saturday's semifinal.

A packed centre court listened in disbelief as the announcement was made moments before Becker and Ivanisevic were to clash in what could well have been the highlight of the seven-day tournament.

"I can hardly open a bottle of water, so there is no sense in playing," an apologetic Becker told reporters. "I can hardly shake hands as well. It's that bad."

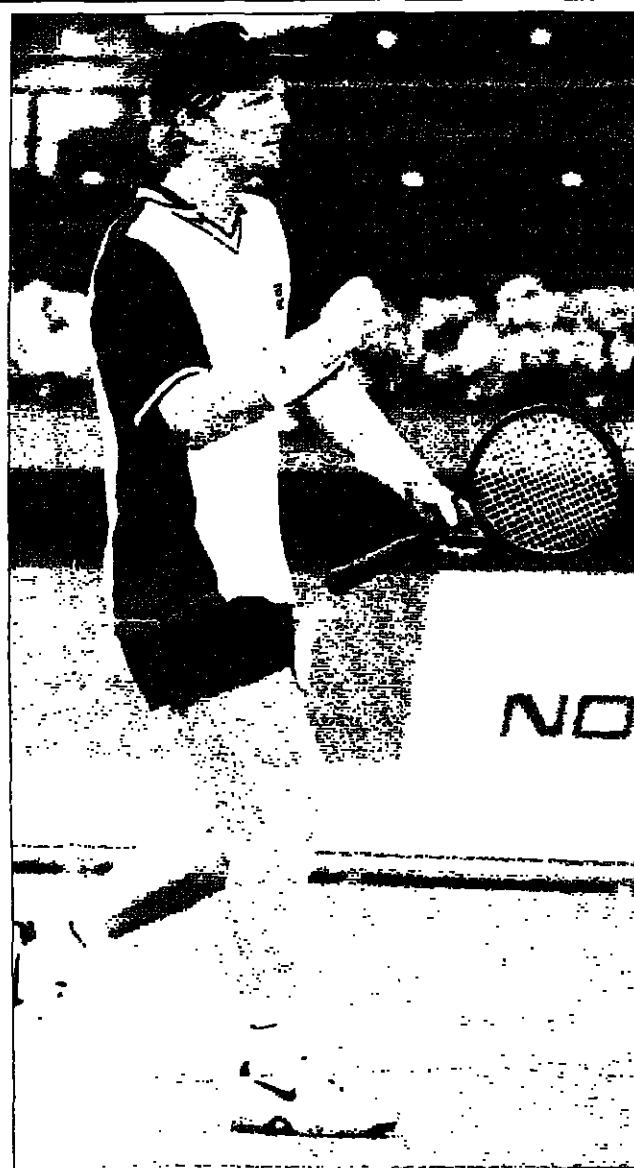
Becker, who has been dogged by injuries to the tendons and bones of his playing hand, missed over three months of play after Wimbledon.

"I'm anxious to find out how serious this is," he added.

"I need to see if it is tendonitis or something else."

Becker later took a flight out of the United Arab Emirates.

Earlier, third-seed Richard Krajicek was ousted by Novak, while American Jim Courier continued his impressive ascent to the last stage.



American Jim Courier celebrates his win over South African Wayne Ferreira at the Dubai Tennis Open. Courier won the match over Ferreira 6-2 7-5 and will play Austrian Thomas Muster in the semifinals (Reuters photo)

Krajicek, hoping to test his recovery skills and match fitness after a knee operation that kept him out of competition for over eight weeks, suffered a humiliating 6-2, 6-2 defeat at the hands of Novak.

Courier, looking much like the player that topped the world rankings in 1992, was a 6-2, 7-5 winner over former Dubai open champion Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

Despite being unseeded here, Courier looked every bit a top player, professionally eliminating his opponents.

"I knew he's a good player and that I needed to play well," Courier

said of Ferreira.

Courier travelled half way around the globe from doing Davis cup duty in Brazil to reach this sporting oasis in the desert.

"It's very rewarding to travel across half the planet and still be able to play good tennis," he said. "I hope I can go on."

The American needs to be at his best on Saturday when he meets second seed Thomas Muster of Austria, who defeated Norway's Christian Rud 6-4, 6-7 (3-7), 7-5.

The Austrian needed three sets and a whole lot of patience to overcome Rud in a bruising 2 hour, 34 minute match.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL:634144 <b>PHILADELPHIA "1"</b> Dennis Quaid, David Thewlis & Sean Connery.... in <b>DRAGON HEART</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:634144 <b>PHILADELPHIA "2"</b> LAYLA ALAWI & MOHAMMAD HNEIDI..IN <b>HALLA HOUSH (ARABIC)</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:699238 <b>PLAZA</b> Adel Imam, Shireen & Saeed Saleh Bakhit Wa Adilah (2) Al Jardal Walkankah Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL:677420 <b>CONCORD</b> CONCORD "1" Bakhit Wa Adilah (2) Al Jardal Walkankah Shows: 12:15, 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" now on daily "Custom Made Citizen" The satirical play starring Mousa Hijazin	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 THE THEATRE WILL BE CLOSED UNTIL MARCH 1 FOR MAINTENANCE & REDECORATION WE WILL BE BACK WITH Aman.. Ya Ho
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Sports  
Bulls eat Hawks  
Spurs, Rockets lose  
ALBUQUERQUE (AP) — The New Mexico Lobos...  
Top f...







## Peru, rebels resume hostage crisis talks

LIMA (AFP) — Peru's government resumed preliminary negotiations Saturday with a representative of heavily armed rebels who are holding 72 VIP hostages.

President Alberto Fujimori's point man in the 60-day-old crisis, Domingo Palermo, just after 11:30 a.m. (1600 GMT) arrived at the negotiating venue, a private home across the street from the Japanese embassy residence seized by a Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) unit Dec. 17.

The Marxist-Leninist rebel unit's deputy leader, Roli Rojas, has represented the guerrillas in the procedural talks, first held Tuesday and then again Friday. No agenda for substantive negotiations has yet been approved.

The guerrilla negotiator was again whisked across the street in a white sedan emblazoned with the Red Cross insignia to the same house where he has been meeting with Mr. Palermo.

Top rebel leader Nestor Cerna has been able to monitor the meetings from inside the Japanese embassy residence. Red Cross officials said.

Also on hand Saturday were dialogue mediators Canadian Ambassador Anthony Vincent, a former Foreign Ministry anti-terrorism chief, and Ayacucho Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani; Red Cross facilitator Michel Minnig; and Japan's observer Teruoka Terada.

The rebels seized the mansion and hostages including ambassadors, businessmen and Mr. Fujimori's brother, seeking to negotiate freedom for some 440 of their jailed members. Fujimori has rejected the demand.

The MRTA also wants the president to soften his belt-tightening economic programmes which they say hit Peru's poor particularly hard. Half of the country's 24 million people live in poverty.

Saturday's talks were the third in a series of what mediators have called preliminary discussions aimed at reaching an agenda for more concrete negotiations.

Friday, Archbishop Cipriani described that day's talk as taking place in "a positive atmosphere" and stressed mediators "consider that real progress has been made." still

there was no dramatic breakthrough, and the negotiating parties had no comment.

Early Saturday, rebels played their anthem over a loudspeaker from the residence. Police in bullet-proof vests packing AKM automatic rifles blared back soft, calm music.

The protracted hostage crisis is taking on historic dimensions: late Sunday, it would break the record for what is believed to have been the longest hostage-taking in the Americas.

In 1980, M-19 Colombian rebels held 56 captives in the Dominican Republic's embassy in Bogotá for 60 days. The M-19 commando ultimately gave up and left for Cuba without its demands being met.

Captives include Mr. Fujimori's brother, Pedro, Peruvian lawmakers and judges; Foreign Minister Francisco Tudela, Japan's Ambassador Morihisa Aoki, and Japanese executives.

Peru is under pressure from Japan to negotiate a swift, bloodless end to the crisis.

In Toronto Feb. 1, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto supported Mr. Fujimori and secured a pledge from him that he would seek to defuse the standoff safely with negotiations, unless hostages were hurt. Tokyo is Peru's leading source of foreign aid.

In Tokyo Saturday, the Japanese government criticised a television network for making radio contact with the rebels. Foreign Ministry Press Secretary Hiroshi Hashimoto said that the contact, made using a radio left in the residence by one of its reporters last month, was "very regrettable."

"In a new stage where preparatory talks have started, it can have a grave influence on the course of the dialogue," he told reporters.

Meanwhile, foreign ministers from Asia and Europe demanded in Singapore the immediate release of all hostages being held here. A statement said the ministers "strongly condemned the criminal act perpetrated by the terrorist group," expressed solidarity with the Peruvian and Japanese governments, and "reaffirmed their determination not to give in" to terrorism.

## Sudan denies its planes attacked Ugandan town

CAIRO (Agencies) — Sudan has denied that its warplanes attacked a northern Ugandan town and said the Ugandan claims were aimed at undermining Iranian mediation between the countries.

Ugandan Defence Minister Amama Mbabazi said eight civilians were injured Thursday evening when Sudanese aircraft twice struck the town of Moyo, about 12 kilometres from the tense border.

A military barracks is located in the town. Uganda has repeatedly accused Sudan of violating its airspace. Sudan has accused Uganda of aiding rebels fighting the government in Khartoum, a charge Uganda denies.

Iran brokered an accord under which Uganda and Sudan agreed to halt rebel activities in each other's territories, but little has been done to put the agreement into action.

"I strongly deny any Sudanese air attack against any area in Uganda," Sudan's government spokesman, Al Tayeb Ibrahim Mohammad Khair, told the Arabic-language service of the British Broadcasting Corporation Friday night.

"Ugandan authorities usually spread such statements whenever the Iranian mediator visits," he added.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hasan Sheikh Al Islam arrived in Khartoum late Friday night as part of the mediation efforts, the London-based daily newspaper Al Hayat reported.

Iran has been mediating between the two countries since a September visit by Iranian President Hashemi

Rafsanjani. Meanwhile, the Alwan daily in the Sudanese capital Khartoum said Saturday that Ethiopia and Eritrea were massing troops along the Sudanese border.

Sudan repeatedly has accused the two countries of involvement in an offensive launched in January by southern Sudanese rebels, who have been fighting since 1983 for more autonomy for the south's Christians and animists.

Both countries have denied it. The rebels are led by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), with backing from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a coalition of opposition groups headquartered in the Eritrean capital Asmara.

A senior south Sudanese official said in an interview Saturday that his country would accept an African initiative, especially one led by South Africa, to reach peace in southern Sudan.

State Foreign Minister Gebriel Rorec told the Sudan News Agency (SUNA) that Khartoum "welcomes any initiative to end the bloodshed."

"Sudan will be pleased if a sincere initiative is made by the African community," he said.

South Africa "is a major African nation and its leader is an influential personality in Africa and Sudan will welcome a South African role in the peace process in south Sudan," he added.

Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir has always been careful to inform South African President Nelson Mandela of developments, Mr. Rorec said.



Several thousand Turkish women gather in the main square of the capital Ankara on Saturday in a protest march against a surge of Islamist activity by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party. Women's groups and the opposition have accused Mr. Erbakan and his party of trying to chip away at Turkey's official secularism with a series of Islamist proposals (Reuters photo)

## Turkish women march against anti-secular moves

ANKARA (AFP) — Thousands of women supporting Turkey's secular system held a protest march here Saturday in protest at calls by Islamists for the adoption of Sharia (Islamic) law.

The women shouted slogans like "Sharia will never prevail in Turkey" and "Turkey will remain secular until eternity" as they marched towards a central Ankara square.

"We are marching here to secure a bright future for our children. We don't want them to suffer from pressure by the extremists," said Senal

Sarihan, head of the contemporary women's association, an umbrella group of women organisations.

Tensions flared in Turkey between Islamists and secular groups in early February after a controversial rally in an Ankara suburb, a stronghold of religious extremists, which became the scene of calls for the adoption of Sharia.

At the rally, Iran's ambassador in Ankara had expressed support for efforts by the Islamists to bring Sharia to Turkey, causing outrage among secular groups.

On Feb. 4, dozens of army tanks drove through the streets of Sincan, where the rally was held, in an apparent warning by the secular military against the religious extremists.

The show of force led Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party to suspend efforts to allow women to wear Islamic headscarves at government offices and universities.

Secularism is one of the main tenets of modern Turkish society.

## Egypt human rights organisation decries 'massacre' of Copts

CAIRO (R) — An Egyptian human rights group on Saturday condemned an attack on a church in southern Egypt in which 10 young Copts were killed and a newspaper said police had detained 130 people for questioning.

Police suspect the Wednesday massacre, the worst attack on Egypt's Christians in almost a year, was the work of the militant Al Gamaa Al Islamiya (Islamic Group), which has been fighting since 1992 to turn Egypt into a strict Islamic state.

The government newspaper Akhbar Al Yom said on Saturday the Interior Ministry had identified four gunmen who carried out the massacre in Abu Qurqas town, 240 kilometres south of Cairo. It said police had rounded up 130 people for questioning.

The independent Egyptian Human Rights Organisation (EOHR) expressed its "extreme condemnation and rejection of this horrific crime."

"By all indications it is a base and premeditated crime aimed primarily at shaking security and the ties and harmony between Muslims and Copts, thereby threatening the state's stability," it added in a statement.

EOHR sent a team of researchers to Abu Qurqas shortly after the attack on a youth meeting in a church there on Wednesday evening. The researchers

interviewed survivors of the attack and witnesses but none were able to identify the gunmen.

The group urged the authorities to move the people wounded in the attack to hospitals in Cairo where they could receive better care than in the local state hospital.

Police in southern Egypt suspect the same gunmen who attacked the church also killed three Coptic Christians who were found dead in a southern Egyptian village on Friday, security sources said.

If the Abu Qurqas killings were carried out by Gamaa it would be the first time Egypt's militants have attacked inside a church.

Gunmen killed eight Christians in a raid on a farm near the southern city of Assiut in February last year but the motive for that attack was never clear.

The Gamaa has attacked Christians in southern Egypt only sporadically, concentrating attacks on policemen and suspected police informers regardless of religion.

EOHR says 82 Copts have been killed in violent attacks in Egypt since 1992. Copts make up about 10 per cent of Egypt's population.

More than 1,000 people have been killed since the Gamaa and other militant organisations began their armed campaign against the Egyptian government in 1992.

## Britain berates Tehran

DUBAI (AP) — A senior British official urged Iran Saturday to reduce its interference in other countries and said Tehran "should come into the modern world."

Jeremy Hanley, minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, said, however, that London would continue maintaining its "critical dialogue with Iran."

Mr. Hanley arrived in Dubai late Friday as part of a tour of Gulf states.

Washington has accused Iran of sponsoring international terrorism and has called for its diplomatic isolation. Last year, Washington enacted legislation that seeks to punish any company that invests more than \$40 million in energy projects in Iran.

Britain has denounced the move and is pursuing investment opportunities in Iran.

Mr. Hanley said that despite differences, the United States and the European Union (EU) agree that Iran must change.

France and Germany have strong business ties with Iran. "We are all determined that Iran should come into the modern world and should reduce some of the actions that it has taken, (like) interfering in the policies of other countries," Mr. Hanley said. He did not elaborate.

## Israeli claims to be Albright's relative

TEL AVIV (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, who said she recently discovered her Jewish roots, may be surprised to hear she also has Israeli relatives.

Czech-born Haim Korbel, who immigrated to Israel in 1939 said Saturday he was a first cousin of Ms. Albright's father Josef and had written Ms. Albright's family a letter shortly after World War II in an attempt to contact relatives that had survived the Holocaust.

"My father and Josef's father were brothers and I remember Josef's parents very well," Mr. Korbel said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press.

"After the war I received a letter from a distant cousin who had moved to Brazil and it included Josef's address in America so I wrote him a letter but he never wrote back," Mr. Korbel said.

Shortly after Ms. Albright's nomination as secretary of state in December, the Washington Post uncovered documents and established that more than a dozen members of her family were killed as Jews during the Holocaust.

Ms. Albright, 59, said she knew nothing of it, and that the information she had received last month about her Jewish roots came as "a major surprise." She was brought up Roman Catholic, and knew little about her family's past.

"I understood when I didn't receive a reply that Josef didn't want to keep in

touch," said the 74-year-old Korbel, who lives in Kfar Ruppin, a rural community in northern Israel.

Mr. Korbel, who grew up in Brno, Czechoslovakia said he last saw Ms. Albright's grandparents — his uncle and aunt — shortly before, moving to pre-state Israel in 1939. Then, Ms. Albright's father brought home his bride-to-be to meet the family for the first time.

"I remember Josef and his parents very well though we didn't meet them many times, Prague was far from Brno and we saw them once a year," Mr. Korbel said. Mr. Korbel said another cousin Josephina Gruber, who is the daughter of Haim and Josef's sister, lives in the Tel Aviv suburb of Givatayim. Gruber came to Israel in a transport of Jewish youth in the early days of the Nazi invasion of Czechoslovakia and also tried unsuccessfully to contact Ms. Albright's father after the war.

Mr. Korbel, who only recently learned that Ms. Albright was the daughter of his cousin Josef, said he was proud of his famous relative. "It's a nice feeling to see that a relative has achieved such success," he said.

He added that he'd like to meet the secretary of state but has no plans to write her. "If there is interest on her part to renew ties I would be happy but I don't think I'll try (to write) again because...we don't want to force ourselves on her," Mr. Korbel said.

## Indian school children fined for not speaking in English

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A school in New Delhi slapped a fine of 100 rupees (nearly \$3) on some of its students for speaking in Hindi, India's principal language, a newspaper reported Saturday. "This is an English medium school, and parents send their children here so that they can speak English fluently," the Indian Express quoted Mount Carmel School Principal V.K. Williams as saying.

"A language can only be learnt through speaking, and in my school students are not allowed to converse in Hindi," he said. The Express said the incident took place last week. The principal's action was denounced by a city official. "I have never heard of such an absurd rule. If it actually exists, we will advise the school authorities to change it," said K.K. Bhasin, director of the department of education.

## Arizona jail going to the dogs — literally

PHOENIX (R) — An Arizona jail is going to the dogs — and the sheriff in these parts would not have it any other way. Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio said he plans to turn to high-tech canine cops to give him extra pairs of eyes and ears at his "tent city" jail in south-west Phoenix. Arpaio said he would unleash four specially trained German shepherd dogs equipped with miniature video cameras to help keep tabs on those residing at the canvas facility. "Dogs are a man's best friend, everyone knows that," said Arpaio, who has a reputation for controversial programmes such as women chain gangs. "But they may not be an inmate's best friend after we're finished."

## Brazilian cuts off penis of ex-wife's lover

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — A jealous Brazilian cut off the penis of a man he thought to be the lover of his ex-wife, a police spokesman said. Raimundo Luiz dos Santos severed the penis with a blunt knife when he arrived at his ex-wife's house in Pouso Alegre in the state of Minas Gerais to pay her alimony and found Delmundo Salvador sleeping next to her in her bed, the spokesman said. He said Salvador was taken to a hospital and had his penis reattached but doctors could not say whether the operation would be a success. Dos Santos' ex-wife denied being romantically involved with Salvador, saying he was only a long-time friend of the family who arrived at her house drunk and asked to take a nap.

## Italy group hands out Valentine's Day condoms

L'AQUILA, Italy (R) — An Italian family planning group handed out 1,500 condoms to students in a Valentine's Day campaign to promote safe sex, but the Roman Catholic church condemned the stunt, saying abstinence was best. "It's an unusual way not only to promote safe sex but also to support love between young people based on mutual respect," said Donatella Tellini, head of the AIED group, as condoms were given to high-school students in the central city of L'Aquila. But L'Aquila Bishop Giuseppe Molinari said young people would do better to listen to teachers "and know that in the long run, the hardest method, sometimes even refusal, pays off."

## Cow carcasses a problem? Compost

COLUMBIA, Missouri (R) — With hundreds of thousands of dead cattle piling up in the Dakotas due to recent blizzards, cattle ranchers are being encouraged to try a new way to get rid of the carcasses: composting. John Hoehne and Charles Fultage, agricultural engineers at the University of Missouri, said South Dakota officials have shown interest in their method of using sawdust compost heaps to break down large farm animal carcasses. A beef carcass "may take a year... but it'll work," Hoehne said.

## Arafat to visit

CAIRO (AFP) — Arafat will visit Turkey next week, a source close to the leader said. Arafat will spend a day in Ankara before heading to Istanbul. The source said Arafat will meet with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit. Arafat is expected to arrive in Turkey on Wednesday.

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## King condolences

AMMAN (AFP) — King Hussein of Jordan has expressed his condolences to the family of the late King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. The king's message of sympathy was conveyed to the Saudi royal family by the Jordanian ambassador in Riyadh. King Hussein said he was deeply saddened by the death of King Fahd and the loss of a close friend.

## Jordan, Iraq discuss trade ties

AMMAN (AFP) — Jordan and Iraq have agreed to discuss trade ties between the two countries. The agreement was reached during a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries. The ministers discussed the potential for increased trade and economic cooperation between Jordan and Iraq.

## Linked to visit Jordan

AMMAN (AFP) — A link has been established between the visit of a high-ranking official to Jordan and the recent developments in the Arab world. The official's visit is seen as a sign of improved relations between Jordan and the other Arab states.

## League to send observers to Algerian elections

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League will send observers to monitor the upcoming elections in Algeria. The League's decision was announced at a meeting in Cairo. The observers will ensure the fairness and transparency of the electoral process.

## Italy group hands out Valentine's Day condoms

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## Yemen smashes counterfeit money gang

ADEN (AFP) — Yemeni authorities have smashed a counterfeit money gang operating in the country. The gang was responsible for the production and circulation of fake banknotes, which caused significant financial losses. The authorities have arrested several members of the gang and seized large quantities of counterfeit currency.